



Office of Public Safety, Health & Welfare
City of Stamford
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**Testimony of Thaddeus K. Jankowski, Director of Public Safety, Health & Welfare
Support of Senate Bill 246, An Act Concerning The Zero-Tolerance Safe School Environment Act
March 2, 2016**

Good afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Thaddeus Jankowski and I am the Director of Public Safety in the City of Stamford.

On behalf of the City of Stamford, the Stamford Police Department, First Responders, and for the safety of students, staff and individuals in the school environment and Connecticut residents, we wish to ask for your SUPPORT of Proposed S.B. No. 246 – An Act Concerning the Zero-Tolerance Safe School Environment Act.

Recently there have been several threats to schools in the City of Stamford that prompted evacuations and the emergency response of Police, Fire and EMS. These types of threats appear to have the intent of creating terror, fear and injury, and are becoming more common throughout the State and the Nation. These malicious events threaten the safety of all those in the school environment, our first responders as well as residents and individuals who utilize Connecticut streets.

Students, teachers and all those in the school environment are put at risk during emergency response events. An evacuation and/or lock down creates panic and fear for all those in this environment. There is a risk of injury to individuals evacuating, and events like these can have a traumatic effect on students and staff. These threats have needlessly caused panic in the school environment and can cause injury as well as anxiety and fear to all those involved.

Each of these events also triggers an emergency response comprised mostly of law enforcement officers, and other first responder resources. These types of events are of a long duration as Police have to ensure the safety of students and teachers by making sure that the school premises are safe for occupancy. These malicious events are overtaxing to public safety resources and as a result can have a delayed response to actual and real emergencies.

Finally, first responders are travelling in emergency response mode in an attempt to reach an emergency scene to protect and save lives. Driving in an emergency response mode to a malicious event is a safety risk and life hazard to residents on our streets and to first responders. These threats trigger an immediate emergency response by law enforcement and other first responders whose intention is to protect. Throughout my career I have seen several fatalities as a result of accidents

due to emergency response to malicious events or non-emergencies and the emergency response they trigger.

As the Director of Public Safety for the City of Stamford, I respectfully urge you to support and adopt SB 246 to increase the penalties when a threat involves a preschool, school or an institution of higher education and to provide for an automatic pardon for certain persons who make such a threat prior to attaining the age of eighteen years. The approval of SB 246 will have the effect of making the school environment safer and will work to stop those individuals whose sole intent is to create terror, fear and injury. The safety concerns and effects that these malicious events have on those in the school environment, Connecticut residents and first responders is unacceptable.

Respectfully,

Thaddeus K. Jankowski
Director of Public Safety, Health & Welfare