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**Written testimony submitted to the School Safety Working Group
Public Hearing
Friday, January 25, 2013**

Senator Boucher, Representative Fleischmann and distinguished members of the School Security Working Group, on behalf of the more than 6,500 physicians and physicians-in-training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to you today.

You may be aware that CSMS has developed the attached policy statement addressing many facets of violence as a threat to public health. Several tenets relate to the safety and well-being of our children and are relevant to the work of this subcommittee. Its overarching principles include the notion that children must have healthy outdoor play, constructive afterschool activities and access to the mental health support they need when they need it. As physicians, we know that far too many of our most vulnerable patients, school is the one sanctuary that provides structure, care and even meals. Our schools are also too often called upon today to provide behavioral health services and other support services on a daily basis without the resources necessary to succeed. They are a critical strand in what we all like to refer to as the “safety net” and as such, resources to provide those services must be preserved and expanded.

Although this subcommittee is established to focus on “School Security,” CSMS will be providing consistent comments and statements throughout the entire process. Most importantly, we wish to emphasize that while each subcommittee focuses on a specific issue, the final product must identify and include actions to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our children in schools, efforts to reduce the incredible cost to the health-care system by gun violence and the increasingly important need to address mental health issues.

The physicians of the Connecticut State Medical Society are eager to work with you to develop any aspect of policy or legislation where our expertise can assist you. We look forward to being part of helping to make Connecticut’s schools safe sanctuaries for all of our children.