



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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Honorable Co-Chairs Boucher and Fleischmann and honorable members of the School Safety Sub Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this afternoon.

The tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School has forever rent the heart of Connecticut and left behind a wound only prayer could ever heal. Connecticut schools are our students' second most familiar surroundings compared to the comfort of their own homes, and like their homes, these children depend on those in charge to provide one of their most basic needs, safety.

I am here to ask this special bipartisan task force to give consideration to a concept that is not new to our state, the inclusion of school resource officers (SROs) in our schools. Speaking for my own City of Stamford, we have just two resource officers, one in each high school. WFSB, Channel 3, reported Wednesday on East Hartford Middle School; they have two SROs at this one school. I do not possess a town by town breakdown, but I do know budgets are why out of 20 schools in Stamford, the two high schools are the only schools assigned a school resource officer. I am proposing the state consider an SRO grant to provide funds to towns that wish to establish or buildup their SRO programs. I am suggesting an 80 percent state grant with a 20 percent match for each participating town. I am asking this task force to consider establishing such a fund with the same deliberation that is given to the state's ECS entitlement.

My fellow legislators, I am not looking to make our schools encampments, and I am not proposing a concept of an armed guard outside every classroom. I am simply suggesting that a police officer, a law enforcement professional, who is trained in dealing with situations that unfortunately may result in an armed confrontation and is not precious minutes away, be steps away to stop or mitigate a tragedy. Every age in our society from childhood to adult looks to a

police officer for security and protection. Please give our students, Connecticut's children, this presence of security and protection in their second most familiar surroundings; please make it possible for school resource officers to be in their schools.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Molgano

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