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Good morning. I'm Scott Corzine, founder and Board member of Risk Solutions International. I'd like to thank the Subcommittee, and particularly Rep. Fleishman, for the invitation to speak with you today.

I was invited on behalf of Risk Solutions International because school safety, security, emergency management is our focus. The firm has provided these services to over 160 public school districts, pre-school systems, colleges and universities in 23 states since 2004. We have worked locally with Trumbull and Stamford Public Schools, and Quinnipiac and Central Connecticut State Universities. We have significant experience with statewide safe schools initiatives.

"School safety and security" are terms typically associated with the issue of targeted violence – bullying, sexual harassment, suicide and mass fatality incidents. However, this is only a subset of the larger practice of "comprehensive emergency management" – which addresses all types of man-made and natural risks, hazards, and vulnerabilities facing schools. I'll address why taking this broader view may be a better frame of reference for legislation that may come out of the Subcommittee's work.

State-wide "conversations" about school safety and security understandably take on increased significance in the aftermath of the horrific mass fatality incidents at Columbine and now Newtown, at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois.

The fact is that the chance of the injury or death at U.S. public or private K-12 schools remains small. From 1999 to 2013 we've seen fewer than 100 deaths from gun violence across the 16,000 school districts in the U.S. encompassing 99,000 public schools and 33,000 private schools. At the same time, bus accidents, playground bullying, environmental incidents, food contamination, pandemics and other natural and man-made hazards are far more likely to have impacted students and staff. While these do not bring us collectively to the sense of outrage we feel after tragedies like Newtown, I urge the Sub-Committee to look beyond the immediate incident – horrible as it was – to the broader picture of emergency preparedness in Connecticut schools.

The objective of comprehensive emergency management is to develop at each school a sustained internal capacity for handling all phases of the process for all

types of incidents – *preventing* emergencies that can be eliminated, *mitigating* the impact of those that cannot, and *preparing* schools to be ready for all types of emergencies so they can respond to them predictably and effectively, and to *recover* from them – physically, operationally, and emotionally. Comprehensive emergency management helps schools become holistically prepared for the many types of routine incidents, and for the less likely, but devastating ones, like Newtown experienced.

A practical reason to approach emergency preparedness is this broader context is because public school districts have always lacked the financial resources to make schools impregnable to the rare madman. To create “fortress schools,” the requirements for staff, equipment and technology are impractical and unaffordable; and few want our schools to resemble prisons.

I suggest several premises, as Connecticut wrestles with policy. First, public schools by their very nature and levels of funding will likely remain relatively “soft targets” - vulnerable to targeted violence. Second, school staff don’t naturally come by emergency management skills - and won’t - unless they are trained and motivated to do so. Third, direct funding for emergency management is catastrophically limited:

Between 2003 and 2010, the REMS grant - from the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools in the U.S. Department of Education - funded 8 Connecticut grant winners. School districts in Waterbury, Milford, Danbury, New Haven, Stamford, Trumbull, Sprague and New Fairfield were awarded an average grant of \$217,500. But they represent only 4% of Connecticut’s 195 districts; what about the other 187 districts? Funding for this federal program ceased after 2010.

The Community Oriented Policing Services grant - “COPS” for short – through the Save Our Schools grant - “SOS” - still funds school security assessments and security technology, from the U.S. Department of Justice. But local law enforcement agencies actually apply for the grant – and local government must match the grant – something many local governments cannot afford to do.

Just as surprising as no direct federal funding, there is also no federal *requirement* for school emergency management! There is, however, an excellent body of guidelines and leading practices (from DHS, FEMA, Presidential Directives, commissions, academics, first responder agencies, and consultants). There is the National Incident Management System (“NIMS”), the Incident Command System (“ICS”) and the NFPA 1600 standard for emergency management. But without the means to go along with the guidelines, most public schools will never develop a sustained preparedness culture.

States that have *successfully* implemented emergency management in schools have done so with funded mandates. My firm has extensive experience with two states that we consider to be models:

- a. Nevada took the statewide standard approach and funded mandated plans for its 17 school districts with \$500,000 over two years - from its federal DHS block grant. Project S.P.A.R.T.A.N. (*Schools Prepared And Ready Together Across Nevada*), is a statewide initiative sponsored and funded by the Nevada Homeland Security Commission with support and cooperation from other agencies. The centerpiece was web-based Nevada school emergency management platform created as a statewide model, which gives districts the ability to edit, update and adapt it to local circumstances. The program concluded with a statewide *Governor's Conference on School Safety and Emergency Preparedness*. It included a strong awareness campaign, created a common language and consistent training requirements. Chris Smith, the Chief of Nevada Emergency Management, and director of Project SPARTAN, has told us he'll be delighted to share the Nevada experience with the Subcommittee.
- b. Delaware has taken this playbook from Nevada, and is currently evaluating proposals to develop what it calls a "Web-Based Planning Tool to Facilitate Comprehensive School Safety Plans" - that each of its 19 districts and 218 schools can customize to their local circumstances. It is a program funded for two years with \$400,000, driven by the State Department of Safety and Homeland Security, along with other agencies. We will be happy to introduce the Subcommittee to the project manager this 2013-2015 initiative.

I recommend that Connecticut develop a similar legislative mandate for comprehensive emergency management in schools – and fund the mandate to a level that creates - in every Connecticut school - the **internally sustainable capacity to prepare for and respond to all threats, risks and vulnerabilities that they face, not just targeted violence**. THAT is emergency management best practice. It is both practical and attainable, but not without funding the mandate.

Some specific recommendations:

- Avoid the temptation to overly focus on preventing school shootings. It is financially impractical for Connecticut to try to make its schools physically impregnable, and all its citizens models of sanity.
  - a. One step – with apologies to the mental health profession – is to seek the input of a far more varied group of experts than just

behaviorists. Look at DOE, DHS and FEMA guidance; ask law enforcement; talk with Nevada and Delaware – and other states.

- b. Some Connecticut school districts have excellent safe school climate plans. I reviewed Westport's plan this weekend, and found it impressive, for example. But by itself – without it becoming part of a comprehensive emergency management plan – it only addresses targeted violence behavior – critical, but hardly sufficient.
- Create a Connecticut state standard model for emergency management in schools with these types of components – in no particular order:
    - a. Connecticut should define a school risk and vulnerability assessment process, so that each district uses a common procedure to assess its strengths and weaknesses in managing the threats they face.
    - b. The model should address the safety and security implications of new school construction and additions to the physical plant, so that they follow CPTED guidelines – well documented by experts like Dr. Randy Atlas, an architectural security expert.
    - c. It should require all-hazards plans of all Connecticut school districts – some 50-60 specific natural and man-made incidents that schools should be prepared for.
    - d. The Connecticut model should address the four phases of emergency management. This means *policies and procedures* for:
      - i. Prevention/mitigation – BIT's, access control, school climate policies, etc.
      - ii. Preparedness – evacuation, lock-down, lock-out, shelter-in-place drills, training and tabletop exercises – with a required evaluation/improvement process.
      - iii. Response to all threats that are specific to each role on the incident management team
      - iv. Recovery – operational (COOP), educational, physical (damage assessment team and facilities, design and engineering), and emotional (CISM, grief counseling and clinical PTSD treatment pioneered in schools by experts like Dr. Marleen Wong.)
    - e. We believe the Connecticut model should address security infrastructure in this order –
      - i. exterior security, access control and visitor management,
      - ii. security policies and shared knowledge of those policies,

- iii. enforcement of security policies,
  - iv. exterior cameras,
  - v. interior security, and
  - vi. interior cameras
- f. For targeted violence incidents the model should mandate the development, activities and responsibilities of Behavioral Intervention Teams (“BITs”). An ANSI standard has developed around best practices in higher education and the workplace for BIT’s as the single best tool for preventing targeted violence incidents. This work has been driven by experts like Dr. Marisa Randazzo, who essentially “wrote the book” for the U.S. Secret Service and the DOE. It can easily be applied to K-12.

BIT’s should a) have multi-disciplinary representation, b) address the behavior of students, faculty, staff, visitors and off-premises threats, c) meet regularly and often, d) have a mission that documents the kinds of behaviors that the BIT will address, e) include a system for tracking incidents and cases, and they should f) develop standards for acquiring information anonymously, publishing behavioral standards, documenting incidents, determining types of intervention and responsibility for them, defining outcomes and follow-up using case management resources.

- g. Connecticut should address good crisis communications policy for public-facing officials, a real source of opportunity (if done well)...or liability (if done less well). This policy should include the proactive use of social media – to track the “conversation” in the ether.
- h. Address comprehensive training - not just for psychologists, counselors and BIT members - but also for all other school staff, each of whom should take appropriate ICS courses. Annual tabletop exercises should be required. Good training makes plans actionable – so they do not become “shelf-ware”.
- i. Plans should always be developed, and training and drills practiced, in coordination with local first responders. These are the cavalry and they need to know what to expect when they respond, and schools need to know what to expect when they arrive and assume incident command.
- j. The Incident Command System (ICS) should be the basis for emergency response organization, roles and nomenclature. ICS is the “lingua franca” of emergency response. The Connecticut plan

should require an ICS-inspired emergency team at every school and district, each member with formal roles and responsibilities during incidents, and clear authority.

- k. The plan should deal specifically with special needs populations.
  - l. It should be a "living," sustainable plan that stays relevant and effective – a web-hosted system that is easily and regularly updated, and customized to local circumstances, just as Nevada and Delaware have specified. It should be available on smart phones for immediate access in the field. And it should provide situational awareness for first responders.
  - m. The plan should provide for communicating very clearly with parents and guardians about roles and expectations during emergencies, and reunification policies and procedures.
- Connecticut should address real impediments to participation – such as staff development limitations, and provide funding that resolves those issues.
  - Hold an annual Safe Schools Conference to celebrate the program's successes, demonstrate its best practices, and replace the time-worn negative feedback loop that most schools are accustomed to, with a positive feedback loop.

Most important, fund the program so that every one of your 195 school districts has the means to implement it. (Nevada's program for its 17 school districts cost \$500,000; Delaware is funding plans for its 19 districts for \$400,000.) I believe that Connecticut can create a similar program for its 195 school districts in a matter of 2-3 years at a cost of several million dollars. This would be a fraction of the value of the State's annual DHS block grants (which approximated \$669 million between 2002 and 2011.)

After the Newtown tragedy, this might be the single most cost-effective use of those federal Homeland Security grants – from a school safety perspective, a good government perspective and a liability perspective. It should be a long term funding commitment that does not diminish as the shock of Newtown inevitably recedes.

Thank you.