

# **SB432\_MD Youth Advisory Council\_Fav.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alexander Hossainkhail

Position: FAV



Maryland Youth Advisory Council  
c/o Governor's Office of Crime  
Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services  
100 Community Place,  
Crownsville, MD 21032

Grace Minakowski, *Chair*  
Will O'Donnell, *Vice-Chair*  
Folashade Epebinu, *Secretary*

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February 7, 2024

**Re: SB 432 | Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings – Requirements**

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council prides itself on being a coalition of diverse young advocates and leaders who serve as a voice for youth in the state of Maryland. As leaders in our communities, and as appointees of the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Maryland Association of Student Councils, Maryland Higher Education Commission and the University System of Maryland, we take every opportunity to address relevant issues by influencing legislation, spreading public awareness and serving as a liaison between youth and policymakers regarding issues facing youth.

The evidence for why school systems should take action regarding active shooter safety drills and training lies in the unpredictable and quickly evolving nature of active shooter incidents. Active shooter preparedness resources emphasize the importance of developing emergency plans and the actions that may be taken during an incident.<sup>1</sup> Due to the unpredictable nature of active shooter incidents, it is important for school systems to carefully consider the implementation of active shooter safety drills and training, ensuring that measures are conducted in a way that safeguards students and staff.<sup>2</sup>

Maryland is a podium state when it comes to addressing detrimental issues concerning school safety. In the 2022-2023 school year, fourteen local school systems submitted a school safety evaluation summary to the Maryland Center for School Safety. The summaries highlighted, in addition to requests made by Local Education Agencies (LEAs) for emergency drill assistance,<sup>3</sup> demonstrate the immediate need for additional staff training on emergency plans, and security policies.

By developing model content and requiring schools to adhere to set standards, Maryland can ensure a consistent approach to active shooter training across all schools, enhancing overall effectiveness. Providing notices to parents, students, and school personnel as required by SB 432, fosters a greater sense of community involvement and engagement in school safety efforts.

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<sup>1</sup>“Active Shooter Preparedness.” n.d. [www.cisa.gov](http://www.cisa.gov). Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. Accessed February 5, 2024. <https://www.cisa.gov/topics/physical-security/active-shooter-preparedness>.

<sup>2</sup> “*The Impact of Active Shooter Drills in Schools.*” 2020. *Everytown Research & Policy. Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund. September 3, 2020.* <https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-active-shooter-drills-in-schools/>.

<sup>3</sup> “2023 ANNUAL REPORT.” 2023. Maryland Center for School Safety. <https://schoolsafety.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

**SB 432** mandates the study of active shooter safety drills' effectiveness and psychological impact, requiring the identification of best practices and incorporation into the annual schedule of drills for local school systems. It also necessitates actions by local school systems, such as data collection, reporting, and providing notice to parents, students, and school personnel. The Council has voted in favor of **SB 432** as it aligns with the Council's Legislative Platform supporting:

- a) Proactive measures to ensure student and school personnel safety and to prevent school violence and vandalism. (Article V. School Safety and Student Discipline; Clause A)

For the sake of Maryland students and school staff, the Maryland General Assembly should aim to enhance school safety emergency practices through research and incorporating proven strategies into the annual schedule of drills for local school systems. For these reasons, the Council supports **SB 432** and respectfully requests a favorable report from the committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Minakowski', written in a cursive style.

Grace Minakowski, Chair  
Maryland Youth Advisory Council

# **Support - SB 432 -Active Shooter Bill- Ashley Egan**

Uploaded by: Ashley Egan

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of  
SB 432 - Public Schools -  
Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

TO: Senator Brian Feldman, Chair and Members of the Education, Energy  
And Environment Committee  
FROM: Ashley Egan, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
Coordinator  
DATE: February 7, 2024

I am the Coordinator of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland. I live in Prince George's County Maryland. I am asking you to support **SB 432 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**. My kids have attended public school since my oldest started pre-k at Avalon Elementary School in 2009. She is now attending her freshman year at St. Mary's College in St. Mary's Maryland.

I still remember the day of her first active shooter drill, because she came home and told me all about it. She told me about how the code words were "Dr. Bruce lost her blue notebook." She then practiced with her two siblings for the next two weeks, just to be prepared.

That drill terrified her.

Since then, all my children have participated in many active shooter drills, as well as many situations where the school was in lockdown because of criminal activity in the area. They have discussed which one of them will sacrifice themselves to the shooter so that the others might live. They have sat in dark coat rooms and bathrooms and had to think about what windows might betray their spot. It is a macabre and deadly version of hide in seek that they have had to perform multiple times a year.

They say it is just like a fire-drill, but is it?

As a mother, I can't even begin to understand what they are going through, the Columbine High School Shooting was two years after I graduated from college. My children were shocked that I didn't have active shooter drills when I was in school. They hadn't been invented yet!

I am asking you to pass this bill, to study the effects of these drills on our kids and to provide them support to make it through the trauma that we are inflicting on them. This bill is a huge step in protecting our children. Please pass it.

***Ashley Egan***

7604 Lanham Lane  
Ft. Washington, MD 20744

# **Support - SB 432 -Active Shooter Bill- Marianne De**

Uploaded by: Ashley Egan

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of  
SB 432 - Public Schools -  
Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

TO: Senator Brian Feldman, Chair and Members of the Education, Energy  
And Environment Committee

FROM: Marianne DeBow

DATE: February 7, 2024

I am asking you to support **HB 416 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**.

My 6-year old grandson and his family experienced their first active shooter drill this year. For the last several years, he had attended a Montessori school which did not have active shooter drills.

My daughter is a therapist, but the first contact she had with the school about an impending active shooter drill was an email sent from the school to parents the morning of the drill. As you might imagine, my daughter was very upset to have not been forewarned so she could talk with her child about this new type of drill. She also wanted the "script" the school and teachers would use, so she would know the language being used to communicate to her child.

I was to pick my grandson up from school that day and so we made arrangements for his dad to pick him up in case he needed to discuss the drill. My grandson said nothing about the drill and it wasn't until days later that my daughter found out it did not occur that day. But, the active shooter drill was scheduled for another day.

My daughter was able to prepare her child for it, but it was still traumatic.

My grandson told her, "if one day I don't come home from school, it means I am dead".

Additionally, after the drill, it was the first time blood and dead people appeared in his drawings.

I think we forget how traumatic these active shooter drills are for youngsters.

*Marianne DeBow*

Pikesville, MD 21208  
District 11

**Support - SB 432-Active Shooter Bill- Rowan Egan,**

Uploaded by: Ashley Egan

Position: FAV



**Testimony in Support of  
SB 432 - Public Schools -  
Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

TO: Senator Brian Feldman, Chair and Members of the Education, Energy  
And Environment Committee  
FROM: Rowan Egan, Oxon Hill High School  
DATE: February 7, 2024

I am a freshman at Oxon Hill High School in Prince George's County. I am asking you to support **SB 432 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**.

In my county, they have put in the following preventative measures: Metal Detectors, Clear Backpacks, Uniforms and ID Checks. Our high school has the same protocols as our lawmakers. We, students from Pre-K to twelfth grade, are *mandated* to be there. We *have* to put our lives at risk in the same way that our *elected officials* do. All to get an education.

And you might think, "Well at least we have those measures. At least the kids are safe." But what happens if those measures don't work? Because, in my experience, they don't. I have literally set off Metal Detectors by walking through them too quickly. However, my sister got through with two large batteries in her pocket.

So what about clear backpacks? Surely those will prevent a gun from getting in. Maybe. But at what cost? Clear backpacks are smaller. They break far more easily than regular backpacks. And, they are not reliable in the rain, I have had entire journals get destroyed while waiting for my bus in a light drizzle.

So if those measures don't work, what happens next? We put paper on the windows, hide in a corner, and...wait. We have practically *no* fail safes if those preventative measures don't work. Most active shooters are not adults, but former students who have had the same training as we have. They are going to see a piece of paper on a window and realize that that is where the kids are.

It's like when you are playing chess and all you have to protect your king is a pawn. Winning is possible, but not likely.

Our protocols should make us safer, not better targets. Guns aren't effective at close range. They are long range weapons made for wars. Not only does hiding in a room not make us safer. But it can help the active shooter be more effective, by creating the perfect conditions for a massacre.

We don't fight wars anymore by standing in a field and shooting at each other, we evolved into trench warfare. Our Active Shooter Protocols should also evolve. We need research to figure out the best way to save the most lives.

***Rowan Egan***

7604 Lanham Lane

Ft. Washington, MD 20744

**\_Support - SB 432 -Active Shooter Bill- Aspen Egan**

Uploaded by: Aspen Egan

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of  
SB 432 - Public Schools -**

**Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

TO: Senator Brian Feldman, Chair and Members of the Education, Energy  
And Environment Committee

FROM: Aspen Egan, Oxon Hill High School

DATE: February 7, 2024

I am a junior at Oxon Hill High School, I live in Prince George's County Maryland. I am asking you to support **SB 432 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**. I am concerned, because I feel like our current Active Shooter Protocols are ineffective.

For those of you who've never experienced an active shooter drill, in my experience, a typical drill goes as follows: First, we receive word that the school will be going on lockdown, typically over the announcements. Sometimes they announce whether or not it's a drill, but often our only indicator is the reactions of the teachers. Next, the teacher locks the doors to the classroom, puts a piece of paper over the window on the door, and closes the blinds. Finally, we all either hide in the corner of the room, or simply shut our laptops and sit at our desks. Then we wait. Most drills only last for about five minutes, to avoid taking too much time out of the school day, but I've had some that have gone for around 10 and at most 20, though they were typically towards the end of the day and simply lasted until dismissal. At the end of the drill, they'll announce that the drill is over and we continue with our day.

In the name of transparency, I'll admit that I'm not entirely sure that I agree with the trauma aspect of the bill. I think that these drills are entirely necessary and that some trauma may just be worth it. While nobody *likes* to admit it's a choice we need to make, active shooters are a major problem in this country and I'd much sooner choose to undergo ten minutes of trauma, than to be gunned down in a hallway. However, I do *support* the bill, because I believe that the drills, and the protocols for a real threat, need to be re-evaluated.

I've been in lockdown drills and real lockdowns since I started school in kindergarten. Throughout all of these drills and lockdowns, I've always thought one thing: "If this was serious, we'd be dead." I've never been in a lockdown where a shooter has made it into the school and, I worry, that that's the only reason I can be here today. All the real lockdowns I've experienced have been the result of crime in the area. I'm not alive because the protocols worked, I'm alive because the shooter didn't *want* to kill me.

We are literally playing rock, paper, scissors with our lives and putting up paper. If someone had made it into the school with the intention of killing children, do you think a piece of paper is going to stop them? What does cowering in the corner achieve, besides making it easier to target us all at once? In each and every lockdown that we encounter, we turn our students, the future of our society, into sitting ducks, waiting to be gunned down by someone who's probably spent years of their life being ignored and overlooked when they needed help.

People don't just wake up one day and decide to kill innocent children. By the time someone reaches that point, they're not going to stop and think: "Oh, the door to the classroom is locked on a Wednesday at 1:23 PM, clearly there are no kids here." They're not going to go home and move on with their life. Any person with more than three brain cells can realize that a school probably isn't empty just because they can't see the kids. And if they make it in? I guess that's it. What are we going to do? We have no defense. And I think that's why a lot of kids I know don't take these drills seriously. People will talk during lockdown drills. I've had teachers *scream* at 5th graders during lockdown drills. I, personally, have been in at least two lockdowns where police were outside of our school for over an hour, and I sat there doing homework.

Unfortunately, when we get to the point in which our actions may signal to a shooter that someone is there, that there are victims waiting to be slaughtered, we're already doomed. If someone is close enough to hear our whispers, our typing, or even screaming, there's nothing anybody can do besides sit there and pray. Whether we live or die isn't dictated by anything we could possibly do. Our continued existence—the existence of myself, my little brother, my genius friend, my emo friend, the person I sit next to in biology whose name I don't know—our lives are now dictated by the shooter's ability to aim. And all we can do is sit there and take it.

Maybe we could pray, but I'm an atheist, the best I've got is to pray to science that this guy loaded his gun wrong. So yeah, I'm going to do my homework. Yeah, I'm going to talk to my friends. Because what's the point in not doing so? If I make it out, then I don't have to do the homework. And if the shooter hears me, I'm dead no matter what, so I might as well die with no history work to carry to the other side. I'm sure it'd be a pain to figure out how to turn it in anyway, and I don't need my grades going down just because of a pesky gunshot wound.

I don't entirely know what the best protocols would be.

I can't guarantee that there is a better protocol.

But I do support researching the most effective methods to ensure that I make it out alive.

This isn't some protocol to determine who wins a tie.

This can't be done halfway.

Children's lives are at stake.

*Aspen Egan*

7604 Lanham Lane

Ft. Washington, MD 20744

**SB 0432 MSPA Letter of Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Bradley Leposa

Position: FAV



Bill: **Senate Bill 0432 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

Position: **Support**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 Maryland school psychologists. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state.

We support the changes to the Education Article proposed in Senate Bill 0432 as they relate to active shooter/assailant drills in public schools. According to the Best Practice Considerations for Armed Assailant Drills in Schools document published jointly by the National Association of School Psychologists and the National Association of School Resource Officers, drills must ensure the proper level of readiness while balancing the potential trauma that could result from the drills. The changes proposed in SB 0432 align with these best practices. Specifically, the bill would ensure that drills, unless voluntary and after school hours, do not include potentially traumatic elements such as sounds intended to imitate gunfire, simulated explosions, or role-playing as an active shooter or victim. The bill also ensures that students and staff would have access to emotional support as appropriate before, during, and after a drill that accounts for individual student needs.

If we can provide any further information or be of assistance, please contact us at [legislative@mSPAonline.org](mailto:legislative@mSPAonline.org) or Sarah Peters at [speters@hbstrategies.us](mailto:speters@hbstrategies.us) or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

Bradley Leposa, PHD NCSP  
Chair, Legislative Committee  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association





**SB0432\_Active\_Shooter\_Drill\_Notification\_MLC\_FAV.p**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0432**  
**Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings**  
**Requirements**

**Bill Sponsors:** Senators Kagan and Feldman

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0432 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

One requirement of SB0432 is for local school systems to provide parents with the annual schedule of active shooter safety drills. We support these drills to help people practice how to respond to a real active shooter event and improve students' chances of survival. However, active shooter drills can cause anxiety, stress, or trauma for some children, especially if they are not informed or prepared in advance.

Therefore, it is important that parents be informed of active shooter drills, thus allowing parents to care for their children's emotional needs both before and after. The notification can also allow parents to be engaged in the process, ensuring that the drills are carefully planned and implemented, with clear objectives, guidelines, and feedback mechanisms.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **Sheriff Uy Letter to Senator Kagan Supporting SB 4**

Uploaded by: Christopher Feldenzer

Position: FAV



Maryland's First  
Nationally Accredited  
Sheriff's Office



50 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Md. 20850  
240-777-7000  
240-777-7148 Fax

## SHERIFF MAXWELL C. UY

February 6, 2024

**VIA E-MAIL:** [Cheryl.Kagan@senate.state.md.us](mailto:Cheryl.Kagan@senate.state.md.us)

Senator Cheryl C. Kagan  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Suite 2 West  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: SB 432 – Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings -- Requirements**

Dear Senator Kagan:

This letter confirms my stated support for enactment of SB 432. As you know, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) is actively involved in promoting school safety and staffs a Community Engagement Officer (CEO) at Magruder High School. In our view, the proposed legislation contains valuable enhancements to the current status of the Maryland Center for School Safety and current school safety programs as they relate to active shooter drills.

First, I think the requirement to study the effectiveness and impact of active shooter drills by researching and analyzing data collected from local school systems provides an essential mandate to continually improve such drills by using a data-based approach that allows for an annual evaluation and updates in the model policy. Second, I think the provision for increasing mental health services for students and school staff who need such services before, during and after such active shooter drills will go far to allay the fears of parents and staff who may be particularly apprehensive about the notion of active shooter drills generally. Third, I am particularly pleased that the bill provides notification procedures for parents at the beginning of the school year and a requirement that any active school drill procedure occurring during school hours must be developmentally and age-appropriate, as well as avoid specific scenarios – loud sounds imitating gun fire or explosions and role playing – that may be disturbing and traumatic for students and school personnel. In my view, all of these legislative changes can only improve the active shooter drills currently utilized, and enhance public support, especially that of parents, that is essential for the overall success of such drills.

In sum, the MCSO supports this legislative effort to enhance the requirements for active shooter drills in schools. Thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maxwell C. Uy  
Sheriff

# **SB 432 - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings**

Uploaded by: Denise Riley

Position: FAV



*A Union of Professionals*  
**AFT-Maryland**

5800 Metro Drive, Suite 100 • Baltimore, MD 21215-3226  
410/764-3030 • fax: 410/764-3008  
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Kenya Campbell  
PRESIDENT

LaBrina Hopkins  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Written Testimony Submitted to the  
Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
SB 432 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements  
February 7, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

Chair Feldman and members of the Committee, AFT-MD asks for a favorable report on SB 432, which addresses the crucial issue of active shooter drills and trainings in schools. We believe that the proposed legislation is a significant step towards ensuring the safety and well-being of students and school personnel.

The provisions outlined in the bill include the prohibition of active shooter drills or trainings' activities that may be traumatic for students or school personnel; live exercises with individuals role-playing as an active shooter or victim; and similar activities. The bill acknowledges the potential psychological impact of such actions during drills or trainings.

The requirement for local school systems to notify parents in advance of drills or trainings is a crucial component of this legislation. Communication with parents allows families to be informed and involved in the preparation process. Additionally, the mandated mental health follow-up for students and school personnel after such drills is a vital step towards addressing the potential emotional impact these exercises may have.

In addition, the collecting and reporting data on the effectiveness and psychological impact of the drills or trainings to the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), is a data-driven approach that will allow for improvements and development of best practices in active shooter safety drills. It demonstrates a commitment to evidence-based practices and best practices are identified.

This legislation is a crucial step to create a safer and supportive learning environment for our students and school personnel. Again, we ask for a favorable report on SB 432. Thank you.



# **SB 432 (School Drills) 2024.pdf**

Uploaded by: Karen Herren

Position: FAV





## Testimony in **Support** of

### Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings- Requirements

#### **SB 432**

Executive Director Karen Herren  
Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence

February 7, 2023

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and distinguished members of the Committee,

Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence (MPGV) is a statewide organization dedicated to reducing gun deaths and injuries throughout the state of Maryland. We urge the committee for a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 432 which seeks to address how active shooter safety drills are carried out in school systems within the state of Maryland.

The United States experiences more school shootings than nearly all other nations. While deaths from school shootings pale in comparison to the overall toll of more than 110 daily gun deaths in the U.S., each school incident is tragic and traumatizing for both the local community and the nation as a whole - particularly because schools are intended to be safe spaces for children to grow and learn.

One prominent school safety strategy is active shooter drills. These drills typically require students and school staff to remain on lockdown in a designated area and practice specific emergency procedures, which often include staying quiet, locking the door, and turning off lights, but can also feature tactics such as fighting back, distracting the shooter, and evacuating. In some instances the drills are unannounced and simulate an actual active shooter event.

Evidence is unclear that these drills have any positive impact on the outcomes of school shooting incidents.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, under the circumstances it is hard to argue against them wholesale. That said, there is a growing body of evidence that some are being implemented in ways that cause harm even without a shooting event actually occurring. Studies on the mental health of the students, teachers,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-active-shooter-drills-in-schools/>

and parents who experience them demonstrate increases in anxiety, stress, and depression. Further evidence reveals a lasting concern over physical health with long term concerns that this reality may ultimately have lifelong impacts on the generations coming up within this framework.

This legislation seeks to provide a framework for drills to offsets some of these negative impacts by ensuring that they are carried out in the least damaging way possible and that evaluators are in place to assess and adjust programs. While the research is evolving around the impact of these drills, indications are clear that drills should not mimic actual incidents, there should be advance notice when a drill is planned, and school personnel should help create appropriate drill content that involves trauma-informed approaches to address students' well-being.

SB432 further mandates that the Department shall create model content to inform parents of the state's firearm storage laws and best practices for safe firearm storage. The US Secret Service has undertaken two studies of targeted school violence, covering nearly 40 years of incidents. They found that three-quarters of school shooters acquired their firearm from the home of a parent or close relative (73 percent in the first study and 76 percent in the second study). The Secret Service's second study of incidents, from 2008 to 2017, revealed that in nearly half of the shootings, the firearm was easily accessible or was not stored securely.<sup>2</sup> Strong firearm storage laws combined with effective public education is a critical component to reducing the likelihood of these horrific events.

MPGV urges a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 432.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protecting\\_Americas\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protecting_Americas_Schools.pdf)

# **Support - SB 432 Active Shooter Drills -Ken Shilli**

Uploaded by: Ken Shilling

Position: FAV



## Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

### Testimony in Support of - SB 432- Public Schools — Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings — Requirements

TO: Senator Brian Feldman, Chair Education, Energy and Environment Committee  
FROM: Ken Shilling, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate  
DATE: February 7, 2024

As a Unitarian Universalist, I know that we do not need to think alike, in order to love alike. We believe that we have a moral duty to provide public safety for our children to learn without fear of gun violence. In the spirit of love that binds us all together, I am asking you to support **SB 432 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**.

When I went to school in the 1960's, we did not have active shooter drills or lockdowns. Today, we need to have difficult conversations on how to best protect those we love.

SB 432 requires best practices that are trauma-informed, as well as developmentally and age appropriate. It requires appropriate notifications so people can act in informed ways, avoiding any surprise that may trigger trauma. It provides for mental health follow-up, as well as additional support to help people cope.

SB 432 requires that we study the effectiveness and psychological impact of these drills to ensure trauma-informed best practices. It is my fervent hope that the next generation can live safely without the need for active shooter drills.

SB 432 requires distribution of model content on secure firearms storage. Responsible gun owners know that gun safes save lives. Education on secure firearm storage makes our schools safer.

We all have a moral duty to provide for public safety.  
We urge you to vote for Senate Bill 432.  
Let us act together in Love.

We urge a favorable report,

*Ken Shilling*

Ken Shilling, Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate

**SB 432 MCSS favorable letter.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kimberly Buckheit

Position: FAV

<b>Bill:</b>	Senate Bill 432	<b>Date:</b>	February 7, 2024
<b>Title:</b>	Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements	<b>Committee:</b>	Education, Energy, and the Environment
<b>Position:</b>	Favorable	<b>Contact:</b>	Kim Buckheit <a href="mailto:kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov">kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov</a> 443-902-0622

On behalf of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for Senate Bill 432.

MCSS agrees that, *except* for active shooter drills and training happening outside of regular school hours with voluntary participants, active shooter drills and training should be conducted in a trauma sensitive manner without loud sounds that simulate gun fire, or actors role-playing as shooters or victims. Recently published research demonstrated that following training schools increased effective implementation of lockdown procedures with the use of drills that announced to participants “this is a drill”, and concluded the drill with a debrief<sup>1</sup>.

MCSS agrees with the National Association of School Psychologists and National Association of School Resource Officers recommendation to “avoid[] highly sensorial drills that involve simulation activities to mimic a real experience as they can be traumatizing.”<sup>2</sup> MCSS is prepared to engage with partners to identify best practices for active shooter drills and trainings and share information with the Department to inform the annual schedule of drills.

MCSS supports engaging parents, students, and school personnel as partners in trauma sensitive school safety drills and training. Providing parents at the beginning of each school year with the annual schedule of the month in which a school shooter safety drill or training will occur can be included as a best practice. The notification requirements defined in House Bill 515 will minimize trauma for individuals occurring as a result of the drills and training, and allow drills and training to occur in a way that ensures students and school personnel practice procedures in a way that increases preparedness.

MCSS welcomes the opportunity to consult with the Department of State Police in developing model content that informs parents of firearm storage laws and collaborating with Local Education Agencies to ensure distribution of the model content to parents.

Thank you again for taking the time to consider the information shared above, and MCSS respectfully requests the committee give Senate Bill 432 a favorable report.

<sup>1</sup>Jacyln Schildkraut, Emily Greene-Colozzi, Amanda B. Nickerson & Allyson Florczykowski (2023) *Can School Lockdowns Save Lives? An Assessment of Drills and Use in Real World Events*, *Journal of School Violence*, 22:2, 167-182, DOI:10.1080/15388220.2022.2162533.

<sup>2</sup>NASP, NASRO, & Safe and Sound Schools. (2021). *Best practice considerations for schools in active shooter and other armed assailant drills. Updated [Brief]*. National Association of School Psychologists. [www.nasponline.org/armed-assailant-drills](http://www.nasponline.org/armed-assailant-drills)

# **Active Shooter Safety Drills – Requirements SB432.**

Uploaded by: Laura Stewart

Position: FAV



**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland Senate  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee for the Hearing on  
Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings – Requirements - Senate Bill 432  
Feb 7, 2024  
SUPPORT**

Free State PTA represents over 70,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is composed of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. ***Senate Bill 432 , Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings – Requirements - aligns with Free State PTA's legislative agenda which states the schools must provide a safe environment where all students, teachers and staff can thrive.***

Senate Bill 432 builds upon established legislation by requiring collaboration with an institution of higher education or a designated research entity to study the effectiveness and impact of active shooter safety drills or training. Also, it requires that at the beginning of the school year, local school systems inform parents of the schedule for active shooter drills.

An excellent component of Senate Bill 432 is the emphasis it has on communication and collaboration between school staff, students, and parents regarding notification to parents and students about measures the local school system is taking to provide sufficient notifications and information to parents and guardians in advance of walk-through lockdown drills as well as notification after the drills or trainings have occurred. Furthermore, this bill is consistent with the PTA's support of conducting regular and timely communication with families about safety policies and procedures. This is evident in the bill's requirement that communication on drills must include the type of drill (walkthrough, full-scale drill, etc.) and how students will be notified of a drill. Prior to any drill or training, parents must be provided with information to help their students cope with, communicate about, and understand the drill.

The Free State PTA supports the inclusion of safety education in curriculum and community programs. This bill is in sync with appropriate needed preparedness for students to address their own safety should an active shooter become present. In fact, this bill stipulates that they must be announced in advance to school personnel and students, clearly identifying that no threat is present and that they must not include live action simulations that mimic an actual incident or simulate a shooter or gun fire. Moreover, the policies surrounding the drills are required to be created with age- and developmentally appropriate content.

Free State PTA agrees that the effectiveness of active shooter bills should be studied, that students should have access to a mental health follow-up after active shooter bills, and that best practices should be followed carefully. This is in accordance with trauma-informed practices. **Therefore, the Free State PTA urges the passage of SB432.**

Sincerely,  
Gerrod Tyler, President  
[GTyler@fspta.org](mailto:GTyler@fspta.org)

**SB432\_MSEA\_Lamb\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV

**FAVORABLE**  
**Senate Bill 432**  
**Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

**Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment**  
**February 7, 2024**

**Lauren Lamb**  
**Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 432, which would direct the Maryland Center for School Safety to study the efficacy and impact of active shooter drills in schools, identify best practices, and develop content to make families aware of firearm storage laws in Maryland. It would also notify families of a scheduled drill and take measures to mitigate trauma resulting from active shooter drills.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

This legislation establishes important guardrails to protect students and educators against the inherent distress caused by active shooter drills. Importantly, it also takes proactive measures to ensure families are aware of firearm safe storage practices and that school systems will have the data they need to guide policies and practices around active shooter drills or trainings.

These reasonable measures are carefully designed to protect students and educators from unnecessary mental harm that may arise from active shooter drills. Ninety-five percent of public schools in the U.S. utilize drill procedures for lockdowns, but research has not conclusively affirmed the value of these drills for prevention of school shootings or protecting individuals when a



school shooting does occur.<sup>1</sup> In light of these findings, it is important for communities, schools, and policymakers to evaluate the efficacy of these drills balanced against the anxiety and mental health issues that students and educators may incur as a result. This bill establishes a solid foundation on which to address and evaluate these issues.

**We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 432.**

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<sup>1</sup> Everytown for Gun Safety, The Impact of Active Shooter Drills in Schools: Time to rethink reactive school safety strategies (9/3/2020) (Updated 12/19/2021), [https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-activeshooter-drills-inschools/?\\_gl=1\\*14llmou\\*\\_ga\\*ODkyNjY3NzM1LjE2NzYxNDE1OTk.\\*\\_ga\\_LT0FWV3EK3\\*MTY3NjE0NzMzOC4zLjAuMTY3NjE0NzMzOC4zLjAuMA](https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-activeshooter-drills-inschools/?_gl=1*14llmou*_ga*ODkyNjY3NzM1LjE2NzYxNDE1OTk.*_ga_LT0FWV3EK3*MTY3NjE0NzMzOC4zLjAuMTY3NjE0NzMzOC4zLjAuMA).

**Melissa Ladd SB 432 Testimony.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Melissa Ladd

Position: FAV

Good afternoon Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the committee. My name is Melissa Ladd. I live in district 14. I am a gun violence prevention volunteer. I am here in support of SB 432 and I ask for a favorable report.

There is no evidence showing that active shooter drills prevent school shootings or do anything to protect school communities during an active shooter situation.<sup>1</sup> Instead, we should be doing all that we can to prevent people; including students, from accessing firearms. Also, studies show that active shooter drills have a negative impact on the mental health of students.<sup>2</sup>

I am also a middle school teacher. At the beginning of each year, I go through all the drill scenarios with my students, including talking about what we do in the case of an active shooter. We did not do a simulation, or an actual drill, but even just talking about the possibility creates enormous anxiety for students. One of my students came up to me in tears after our discussion to ask me if we could please not discuss it again. These children have been subjected to a lifetime of constant fear and threat of school shootings, and are left to bear the emotional brunt, since adults have not solved the problem of guns in schools.

This bill also importantly requires school districts to remind families about their responsibility to lock up their firearms. More than 80% of school shooters gain access to the weapons used in the shooting at their own home or the home of a friend or family member. It is only common sense that we remind families of the part they play in reducing the possibility of their weapon being accessed and used in such a way.

Mandating that school districts notify families about these drills, and do all that they can to lessen their traumatic impact is an important step. Our country is now a nation of survivors of gun violence, and we must make sure that we use trauma-informed practices for school drills.

Thank you for your time.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://everytownresearch.org/solution/active-shooter-drills>

<sup>2</sup>

<https://everytownresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2024/01/Minimizing-the-Trauma-of-School-Shooter-Drills-.pdf>

# **Testimony in favor SB 432 - N. Vinski Ibrahim.docx**

Uploaded by: Natalie Vinski Ibrahim

Position: FAV

**Natalie Vinski**  
**District 12a**  
**Cell 617-230-7404**

Good afternoon, Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the committee, my name is Natalie Vinski.

I live in Columbia, in District 12a, in Senator Lam's District.

I'm also a survivor of gun violence and the mother of a survivor of gun violence.

I am here in support of SB 432 and I ask for a favorable report.

Two years ago, my son Walter and I experienced a shooting near our home, an incident that left lasting scars on both of us. Walter, who was just four at the time, was diagnosed with anxiety soon after, a condition we continue to navigate.

Fast forward to this past September, as Walter started kindergarten at our local elementary school. In the first week of the quarter, an email from the school principal caught my attention. The students had participated in a drill earlier that day. Concerns flooded my mind - What kind of drill? How did Walter cope? What other drills were scheduled? Would there be lockdown or active shooter drills? Most importantly, who would be there to address his questions and alleviate his anxiety?

The principal agreed to meet and discuss my concerns. They provided me with details about the drills and the scheduled dates. A conversation with Walter's teacher assured me that the drills were handled with age-appropriate language. The school counselor agreed to be present in Walter's classroom during the drill and to follow up afterward. As a parent, I felt reassured, knowing that if my child had to participate in a drill, he would be fully supported on multiple levels and I believe that ALL children and families in Maryland deserve this same assurance.

If our state law mandates active shooter drills for our children, it only makes sense that we minimize the traumatic impact for them to the fullest extent possible. The necessity of SB 432 is clear to me, to Walter, and to all families and children in the state of Maryland.

Thank you for your time.



# **SB0432\_D'Orazio\_Fav.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nico D'Orazio

Position: FAV

Before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB0432 - Active Shooter Drill Notification Bill

SUPPORT

Good afternoon committee members and Chair Atterbeary,

My name is Nico D'Orazio, and I am a Senior at Thomas S. Wootton High School in District 17. I am here today advocating for the support of the Active Shooter Drill Notification Bill, SB0432.

At Wootton, tensions are running high. After having two bomb threats, it is hard to feel safe at school. With each new safety announcement, we worry that it won't be a bomb threat, but rather a real shooter. In fact, having started the second-semester last week, I remember my classmates and I looking around our new classrooms to find safe places in case there is ever a shooter. Therefore, it goes without a doubt that students' fears run deep. Even during just an active shooter drill, our fears remain. With rattling doors, shuttered blinds, and the lights off, it is all too real. Without mental health resources at our hands after a drill, time and time again we have to cope with these stressors on our own.

Rather than potentially traumatizing students with worries of their own lives, SB0432 provides students the opportunity to practice these drills while remaining informed and ensuring they can maintain their mental well-being. Furthermore, with much-needed trauma-informed supports provided after a drill, SB0432 provides a channel for students and staff to work through any emotional distress caused by an active shooter drill.

Lastly, I acknowledge that opponents of this bill state that it will restrict the autonomy of our county Boards of Education. However, in reality, this bill has no infringement upon the operations of currently practiced active shooter drills in Maryland. Rather, with research-founded principles, it aims to make our schools both safer and more comfortable environments. Moreover, because SB0432 requires the Maryland Center for School Safety to collect data on the effectiveness of these drills, we can ensure that each school's drills truly serve Maryland's students. The purpose of every active shooter drill is to train, not to traumatize. Therefore, I urge you to vote in favor of SB0432 in order to truly support the over 800,000 students in Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **SENATE ACTIVE SHOOTER.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nicole Hollywood

Position: FAV

## LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: SB432 Public Schools - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements

Submitted by: Dr. Nicole Hollywood, Board Member

Position: SUPPORT

Greetings. My name is Nicole Hollywood. I am a professor in the University System of Maryland, a resident of the Eastern Shore, a volunteer with the Maryland Chapter of Moms Demand Action, and a parent. I am submitting this testimony in SUPPORT of SB432.

Parents, students, educators, and medical professionals have raised many concerns about the impact that active shooter drills can have on student development, including the risk for depression and anxiety and the risk for lasting symptoms. The American Psychiatric Association, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers, have all declared active shooter drills are a detrimental and unproven school safety tactic. Accordingly, schools must be mindful of the impact of active shooter drills that involve students and take that into consideration when designing such programs and determining whether to even include students.

For states and districts that have a mandate to conduct active shooter drills the American Psychiatric Association, the NEA, and the AFT recommend avoiding drills simulating actual incidents, notifying parents, students, and teachers in advance of planned drills, creating age and developmentally appropriate content in conjunction with teachers and school-based mental health specialists, and combining drills with support systems to address student well-being.

SB432 will help to remediate the trauma of active shooter drills by requiring advanced notification of the drills, preventing realistic simulations, and providing adequate support services before and after drills in alignment with recognized best practices. The bill would also require the development and distribution to parents and guardians of information on Maryland's safe storage of firearms laws.

Some of the most frequently challenged and controversial texts help learners get a better idea of the world, their place in it, understand different dangers, and the importance of having agency over oneself and their choices. Every child needs accurate, factual, and realistic exposure to people's experiences with sex, sexuality and relationships in order to understand what is healthy and in order to give people the knowledge and language to use to speak up in the unfortunate chance that they are dealing with sexual abuse. Further, not all parents have the willingness or knowledge to have important conversations with their children about their sexual health. In these cases, children often turn to information they find in the classroom and school library, as well as to trusted teachers, counselors, and

other educational professionals. Thus, it is important that such educational materials be available to students where they're best able to access it.

Emboldening people with the opportunity to object to curriculum and ban materials, including books, readings, workbooks, worksheets, handouts, and digital media based on beliefs about morality, religion, personal philosophy, or political ideology is dangerous and only promotes tunnel vision. Accordingly, Salisbury PFLAG opposes this bill and recommends an UNFAVORABLE report in committee.

# **Testimony in support of SB0432.pdf**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0432\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV  
2/8//2024

Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#/0342 - FAVORABLE**  
**Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0432, Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

I have attended Frederick Community College as a Senior Adult student since turning 62 years old. In the process of earning my three degrees I have attended classes with many students ages 16-25. Every class is supposed to begin with a viewing of the safety and security videos. I have observed how these videos trigger some of my classmates. It creates psychological distress as they contemplate what might happen in an active shooter situation. This climate of fear is heightened by the placement of posters in all college buildings advising them to apply the steps in dealing with an active shooter.

This bill is an attempt to study how we communicate a safety message without elevating the fears of students. It also supports parental involvement when it mandates that parents be notified of an active shooter drill. At younger ages we can create a safer environment for the safety messages we expose our children to by letting parents know of the drill so they can prepare their child and help them talk it out so as not to be overcome by any fears the drill activates.

As a member of Moms Demand Action this bill is a priority for passage this year.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0342.**



**SB 432 - MoCo\_MCPD\_FAV (GA 24).pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Morningstar

Position: FAV



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

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**SB 432**

**DATE: February 7, 2024**

**SPONSOR: Senators Kagan and Feldman**

**ASSIGNED TO: Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: SUPPORT (Department of Police)**

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### **Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings – Requirements**

Senate Bill 432 prohibits active shooter drills or trainings in local schools from including activities that could be traumatic for students and school personnel. The bill requires school systems to notify parents *prior* to the exercises and directs the schools to provide mental health services for students and personnel who may be traumatized by the simulations. Data must be collected on the effectiveness and psychological impact of the drills on the children and personnel and must then be reported to the Maryland Center for School Safety for further analysis.

Increasingly, the value and effectiveness of active shooter simulations as routine school safety exercises are being called into question as unnecessarily creating heightened anxiety and worry in our schools and communities. In the absence of conclusive evidence that active shooter drills and training are making our schools safer, this bill identifies an important mental health and public safety issue and creates a path forward to address it.

The Montgomery County Department of Police urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report on Senate Bill 432.

# **Active Shooter Training Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sen. Cheryl Kagan

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements (SB432)**  
Senate Education, Energy, & the Environment Committee: February 7, 2024, 2:00pm

School shootings have become an all-too-familiar reality. Parents, teachers, school staff, and administrators want to prepare their children for a day they hope never arrives. This is a noble goal, but we must ensure that Maryland's students are not afflicted with long-lasting trauma.

In 2023, there were 340 school shootings-- almost one per day.<sup>1</sup> In 95% of schools in the U.S., active shooter drills are conducted to educate students, staff, and teachers on protocol.<sup>2</sup> While the effectiveness of such trainings needs more study, they are widely implemented. An average K-12 student will participate in 52 active shooter trainings. Many school districts assign students to role-play as shooters or victims and play recordings of gunfire or explosions. Not surprisingly, many children experience these drills as deeply traumatic.

SB432 would:

- Require the MD Center for School Safety (MCSS) to research the effects of active shooter drills;
- Update best practices for mandated active shooter drills;
- Give parents the annual schedule of drills (without exact dates) at the beginning of the school year;
- Make announcements in advance to students and staff;
- Identify students and staff who may need additional support;
- Prohibit schools from using live role-playing exercises or loud sounds imitating gunfire/explosions;
- Notify parents after a drill;
- Provide mental health follow-ups; and
- Initiate a collaboration between MCSS and the Maryland State Police for the creation of an instructional model regarding safe storage of firearms.

Anecdotal accounts from parents reveal that many students whose schools initiate an active shooter safety drill come out of the experience with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This is even worse in children with existing conditions such as PTSD, C-PTSD (Complex-PTSD), anxiety, or other mental health issues when they are placed into situations that may remind them of other distressing events in their lives. Research demonstrates that active shooter drills cause a 39% increase in depression; 42% increase in stress and anxiety; and a 23% uptick in physiological manifestations of trauma— in children as young as five years old.<sup>3</sup>

SB432 would alter existing law to better protect our State's children from mental and emotional harm.

This bill passed the House of Delegates unanimously last year.

**I urge a favorable report on SB432.**

<sup>1</sup> Modan, Naaz, and Kara Arundel. "Another Record High: Counting School Shootings in 2023." K-12 Dive, December 20, 2023.

<https://www.k12dive.com/news/2023-total-school-mass-shootings/703007/#:~:text=School%20shootings%20reached%20yet%20another.>

<sup>2</sup> Everytown for Gun Safety. "Reconsider Active Shooter Drills." Everytown, 2024. <https://www.everytown.org/solutions/active-shooter-drills/>.

<sup>3</sup> Everytown for Gun Safety. "The Impact of Active Shooter Drills in Schools." Everytown Research & Policy, September 3, 2020. <https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-active-shooter-drills-in-schools/>.

# **CIF Testimony - Active Shooter Drills SB 432 2.5.2**

Uploaded by: Woodie Kessel

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY OF THE CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM: ADVOCACY  
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
ON FEBRUARY 7, 2024  
BEFORE THE MARYLAND SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY,  
AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
REGARDING SB0432 - CROSS-FILED WITH: HB0416  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS - ACTIVE SHOOTER SAFETY DRILLS OR TRAININGS  
REQUIREMENTS**

**SUPPORT**

Honorable Chair Senator Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, and distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Critical Issues Forum: *Advocacy for Social Justice* (CIF), provides this testimony in support of Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills - Requirements - SB 432, sponsored by Senators Kagan and Feldman. Responding to the need for children to learn in a safe and secure environment, this legislation provides essential requirements related to the conduct of active shooter safety drills to promote the safety of school children that are developmentally and age-appropriate. The bill also requires advance notification to parents, mental health follow-up for students and school personnel, and data collection to evaluate the effectiveness and psychological consequences of the safety drills and training and improve it as needed. The legislation also calls for the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) to develop model content to inform parents of the State's firearm storage laws.

Composed of Temple Beth Ami, Kol Shalom, and Adat Shalom, CIF is a coalition of synagogues that include over 1,750 families and three denominations of Judaism: Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist. CIF is a vehicle for our congregations to speak out on policy issues that relate to our shared values, including the Jewish tradition's emphasis on the primary value of human life. Saving lives and gun violence prevention is a top priority.

Tragically, every day, nearly 20 children are injured and killed by guns in this country. This is a public health emergency that is preventable using thoughtful, evidence-based clinical and public health approaches that employ informed cross-sectoral primary prevention, preparedness, and intervention efforts. It is an appalling statistic that firearms are the leading cause of death in children and youth ages 1 to 21 in Maryland and the United States, surpassing

injuries and deaths from motor vehicle crashes.<sup>1</sup> Nationally, deaths by suicide and homicide, particularly from firearms, increase with age. In Maryland, 131 children and teens died by gun violence in 2021. This was more than twice the number of deaths from motor vehicle crashes.<sup>2</sup> Thirteen percent (16%) of the firearm deaths in Maryland were by suicide, and 84% were homicides.<sup>3</sup> It is outrageous and intolerable that gun violence is now the leading cause of death for our children.

To help keep children safe, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), representing 67,000 pediatricians, has called for stronger common-sense firearm legislation, including strengthening background checks, supporting effective extreme risk protection orders, encouraging safe firearm storage, banning assault weapons, and addressing firearm trafficking and school shootings.<sup>4</sup> Tragically there are more than 135 firearm-related deaths that occur on average each day in the US, including those from mass shootings. The severe consequences of this uniquely American epidemic sadly extend far beyond the dead and wounded, their surviving families, and members of their communities.

In 1975, *The New York Times* published an article entitled, “Violence in Schools Now Seen as Norm Across the Nation.”<sup>5</sup> Nearly 50 years later, according to an article published in *The Washington Post* on 3/29/2023, there have been 376 school shootings since the Columbine High School massacre in 1999.<sup>6</sup> In 2024, the nightmare continues unabated feeding parents and teachers’ and school administrators’ fears. According to an article in *Education Week* published in January 2024, “There have been 6 school shootings this year that resulted in injuries or deaths, according to an *Education Week* analysis. There have been 188 such shootings since 2018. There were 38 school shootings with injuries or deaths last year. There were 51 in 2022, 35 in 2021, 10 in 2020, and 24 each in 2019 and 2018.”<sup>7</sup> Moreover, according to research from the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, “Students exposed to school shootings face ‘lasting, persistent adversity in their educational and long-term economic outcomes...[they] have higher rates of school absenteeism, lower high school and college graduation rates, and earn lower incomes by their mid-twenties.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CDC Wisqars On-line Causes of Injury-Related Death Data Base, Violence-related Firearm Deaths; Both Sexes; Age Range: 1 – 21; All Races and Ethnicity; US and Maryland; 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/gun-violence-prevention/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/1975/06/14/archives/violence-in-schools-now-seen-as-norm-across-the-nation.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/interactive/school-shootings-database/>

<sup>7</sup> School Shootings This Year: How Many and Where (2024, January 4). *Education Week*.

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/school-shootings-this-year-how-many-and-where/2024/01>

<sup>8</sup> Trauma at School: The Impacts of Shootings on Students' Human Capital and Economic Outcomes Marika Cabral, Bokyoung Kim, Maya Rossin-Slater, Molly Schnell, and Hannes Schwandt NBER Working Paper No. 28311 December 2020, Revised May 2022 JEL No. I24,I31,J13

The AAP and we fully recognize the profoundly traumatizing consequences of all of the firearm bloodshed in our country, including “increasing concerns about the risk of mass casualty events in schools throughout the United States.”<sup>9</sup> The AAP recommends that children and adolescents be included in exercises and drills to advance readiness and preparedness in the same manner that fire safety or weather related threats are handled. However, the drills must be planned and conducted in a manner that is developmentally appropriate and thoughtfully attending to the potential emotional impact of participation that are evidence-based with guidance from experts. This is especially true for younger children, those who have experienced trauma in the past, and children with special health care needs. The AAP Policy Statement on “Participation of Children and Adolescents in Live Crisis Drills and Exercises” makes 11 evidence-based recommendations consistent with the provisions in Senators Kagan and Feldman’s bill.<sup>10</sup> There is a litany of literature to establish and maintain a healthy school climate for learning and in support of the AAP findings and recommendations.<sup>11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17</sup> HB0416 also follows the guidance provided by the US Department of Education’s *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*.<sup>18</sup>

While SB 432 also requires advance notification to parents, and mental health follow-up, it also requires the Maryland Center on School Safety to analyze data on the effectiveness and consequences of active shooter drills. Assessment of the impact of the drills is critical to gain a real understating of the risks and benefits of drills. Because of a deep sense of fear, although school shootings are rare, active shooter drills are implemented in over 95 percent of American K–12 schools today.<sup>19</sup> While there is limited evidence of the effectiveness of drills due in part to methodological challenges, clear descriptions of the elements of the drills, e.g., student ages,

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<sup>9</sup> Schonfeld DJ, Melzer-Lange M, Hashikawa AN, Gorski PA; Council on Children and Disasters, Council on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention, Council on School Health. Participation of Children and Adolescents in Live Crisis Drills and Exercises. *Pediatrics*. 2020 Sep;146(3):e2020015503. doi: 10.1542/peds.2020-015503. PMID: 32839245

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Heath, M. A.; et al.: History of School Safety and Psychological First Aid for Children. *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*. Oxford Journals. Volume 7, Number 3. Pages 206-223. 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Zullig, K; et al: School Climate: Historical Review, Instrument Development, and School Assessment. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*. 28(2) 139–152. © 2010 SAGE Publications

<sup>13</sup> ElSherief, M; et al: Impacts of school shooter drills on the psychological well-being of American K-12 school communities: a social media study. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*.

<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00993-6>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/blog/gun-violence/17-facts-about-gun-violence-and-school-shootings/>

<sup>15</sup> How Lockdown Drills Affect America’s Children? <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2021/03/us/school-shooting-lockdown-drills/>

<sup>16</sup> Moore-Petinak, N; et al.: Active Shooter Drills in the United States: A National Study of Youth Experiences and Perceptions. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 67 (2020) 509e513. June 2, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Brock, M; Kriger, N; Miró, M.: School Safety Policies and Programs Administered by the U.S. Federal Government: 1990–2016. Office of Justice Programs’ National Criminal Justice Reference Service.2018.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*, Washington, DC, 2013.

<https://rems.ed.gov/REMSPublications.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> The Impact of Active Shooter Drills in Schools. Report of Everytown Research & Policy. 2023.

<https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-active-shooter-drills-in-schools/>



intensity of drill, police involvement, frequency, duration, etc., the drills may be traumatic and harmful to mental health.<sup>20</sup> “Active shooter drills in schools are associated with increases in depression (39%), stress and anxiety (42%), and physiological health problems (23%) overall, including children from as young as five years old up to high schoolers, their parents, and teachers.”<sup>21, 22</sup> All of this underscores the import of SB 432 call for scientific analysis about evidence and consequence, especially unintended consequences of active shooter drills to students of various developmental ages, teachers, and parents, as well as law enforcement.

SB 432 also calls for the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) to develop model content on the State’s safe gun storage laws, which will be sent home annually by schools. The AAP reports that about one-third of American children live in homes with firearms and 43% of those households have at least one unlocked firearm. Thirteen percent (13%) of households with guns contain at least one firearm that is unlocked and loaded or stored with ammunition. Tragically, suicide attempts involving a lethal firearm are nearly always fatal (91%) compared with those involving drug overdoses (23%). The increased risk of suicide is particularly striking for younger persons where guns are stored loaded and/or unlocked.<sup>23</sup>

Marylanders, like so many other Americans, are struggling with staggering loss, isolation, and the resultant mental health impacts resulting from the COVID19 pandemic. Properly securing firearms prevents access to lethal weapons and the likelihood of unintentional firearm injury, death by suicide, and interpersonal/domestic violence. Maryland's Child Firearm Access Prevention laws focus on storing firearms securely, while still allowing gun owners reasonable access to them when needed.

SB 432 provisions are particularly important given the increased gun sales in Maryland—a more than 76% increase in the first 11 months of 2020 over 2019, as evidenced by FBI background investigations.<sup>24</sup> Gun sales in January 2021 compared to January 2020 increased by 134 percent.<sup>25</sup> A significant portion of those gun purchases, 40%, were first-time gun owners who may or may not know about the best safe storage practices.<sup>26</sup>

A 2017 study concluded that, “Pediatric firearm injuries and deaths are an important public health problem in the United States contributing substantially each year to premature death,

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<sup>20</sup> ibid

<sup>21</sup> ibid

<sup>22</sup> Zhu, R; et al.: The impact of security countermeasures on human behavior during active shooter Incidents. Scientific Reports | (2022) 12:929 | <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-04922-8>. [www.nature.com/scientificreports](http://www.nature.com/scientificreports).

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/state-advocacy/safe-storage-of-firearms/>

<sup>24</sup> Rising gun sales put more lives at risk | COMMENTARY; Baltimore Sun Editorial Board; Baltimore Sun; Dec 07, 2020.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/02/03/gun-sales-january-background-checks/>

<sup>26</sup> Background Checks. A Metric for Gun Sales, Hit All-time High, Baltimore Sun, July1, 2020.

illness, and disability of children.”<sup>27</sup> The study authors found that “most children who died of unintentional firearm injuries were shot by another child in their own age range and most often in the context of playing with a gun or showing it to others...children are curious about firearms and will touch a firearm even when instructed not to do so, which points to the importance of adult supervision and the need to store firearms safely and out of the reach of children.”<sup>9</sup>

Although the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that household firearms be stored safely, less than one in three households with children follow this guidance.<sup>28</sup> Yet the research literature demonstrates that adherence to these guidelines by safely storing firearms can significantly reduce adolescent and young adult injuries and deaths. This study concluded that youth suicides could decline substantially if only an additional 20% of gun-owning households began safely storing their firearms. A 1997 study concluded that the first 12 state laws limiting child access to firearms resulted in a 23% lower than expected number of unintentional firearm-related deaths.<sup>29</sup> A later study found that these laws were associated with a 10.8% reduction in firearm suicides overall and an 11.1% reduction in suicide rates for older youth aged 18-20.<sup>30</sup> As this study noted, these “laws may encourage gun owners... [with young children] to adopt safe practices that endure” after their children are older, and “may increase awareness and change social norms to encourage gun owners to secure firearms...” In short, these laws can save our children’s lives.

Maryland’s leaders understood the great importance of preventing firearm access to young people when they passed our State’s current law. Now, the straightforward amendments in Jaelynn’s Law strengthen these provisions and make that law consistent with other Maryland Laws and laws in other states that require safe storage for homes with children. Further, raising the safe storage age will send an important message that storing lethal firearms safely is critical. Safe storage of medications, alcohol, and toxic materials, as well as pool fences and securing children in car safety seats and seatbelts, has saved the lives of children! Indeed, we use two mechanisms – door and ignition, to unlock our automobiles and start our cars. Securing lethal weapons safely should be no different. It is feasible, inexpensive, non-compromising and simply makes good sense. Using a biometric/pin code to open a gun safe only takes seconds similar to dialing 911 on a smartphone.

Given the increasing risk of death by suicide involving a firearm, SB 432 smartly calls for the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), in consultation with the Department of State Police, to develop and distribute model content regarding the State’s firearm storage laws. This

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<sup>27</sup> Fowler KA, Dahlberg LL, Haileuesus T, et al. Childhood Firearm Injuries in the United States. *Pediatrics*. 2017; 140(1): e20163486.

<sup>28</sup> Monuteaux, Michael C., et al. Association of Increased Safe Household Firearm Storage with Firearm Suicide and Unintentional Death Among US Youths, *JAMA Pediatrics* , 2019; 173(7):657-662. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.

<sup>29</sup> Cummings P, Grossman DC, Rivara FP, Koepsell TD. State gun safe storage laws and child mortality due to firearms. *JAMA*. 1997; 278: 1084-1086.

<sup>30</sup> Webster, Daniel W., et al. “Association Between Youth-Focused Firearm Laws and Youth Suicides.” *JAMA*, 2004; 292: 594. doi:10.1001/jama.292.5.594

provision is consistent with the recently issued White House Actions to Promote Safe Storage of Firearms to take preventive action by securing firearms.<sup>31</sup> We support this provision as safe storage laws are effective. Scientific evidence from an evaluation of over 200 combinations of policies and outcomes conclusively demonstrated that “child-access prevention laws, or safe storage laws, reduce self-inflicted fatal or nonfatal firearm injuries — including unintentional and intentional self-injuries — among youth. Evidence also supports the conclusions that such laws reduce firearm homicides among youth.”<sup>32</sup>

In 1853, the outcry from the first recorded school shooting indicated “that there’s another possible way to view the hierarchy of American rights—one in which the right not to get shot [and suffer the accompanying trauma] is on par with, and may even outweigh, the right to freely carry a gun and use it.”<sup>33</sup> Sesame Street as does SB 432 offers thoughtful ways to help children and families deal with “Traumatic Experiences: First Steps to Hope.”<sup>34</sup>

In summary, SB 432 offers a comprehensive approach to enhance the safety of children in public schools, aligning with evidence-based practices and addressing critical issues related to active shooter drills and firearm safety. The CIF urges the committee to produce a favorable report supporting Senate Bill 432 (and the cross-filed House version HB 416) to keep our children safe while learning and not adding to the trauma and nightmare of school shootings in America.

Nothing can be more important!

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<sup>31</sup> White House Announces New Actions to Promote Safe Storage of Firearms.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/01/25/white-house-announces-new-actions-to-promote-safe-storage-of-firearms/>

<sup>32</sup> Smart, Rosanna, Andrew R. Morral, Rajeev Ramchand, Amanda Charbonneau, Jhacova Williams, Sierra Smucker, Samantha Cherney, and Lea Xenakis, *The Science of Gun Policy: A Critical Synthesis of Research Evidence on the Effects of Gun Policies in the United States*, Third Edition, RAND Corporation, RR-A243-4, 2023. As of February 1, 2023: [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA243-4.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA243-4.html)

<sup>33</sup> Cornell, S.: *The Lessons of a School Shooting—in 1853. How a now-forgotten classroom murder inflamed the national gun argument.* Politico. March 24, 2018

<sup>34</sup>Being There: Helping Families Through Traumatic Experiences *SesameStreetInCommunities .org*

**9 - SB 432 MDH LOSWA\_ (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Jason Caplan

Position: FWA



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 7, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman  
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West, Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: Senate Bill 432 – Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings – Requirements – Letter of Support With Amendment**

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendment for Senate Bill (SB) 432 – Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings – Requirements.

SB432 prompts the Maryland Center for School Safety to collaborate in the development of best practices for active shooter safety drills or trainings. We propose including language access and cultural competency in the development of these best practices.

Specifically, the Department suggests amending this bill to include the implementation of language access planning and cultural competency training guidelines where practicable. Language access plans help ensure that Limited English Proficient individuals have equal access to supports, services, and opportunities. Cultural competence training works to address the disparities that people of racially and culturally diverse backgrounds often experience by fostering intercultural communication skills responsive to cultural difference. A linguistically and culturally competent approach to developing programs and policies is essential to creating inclusive statewide protocols.

If you have any further questions, please contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary

# **SB0432 Laura Mitchell FWA - 2024 Public Schools -**

Uploaded by: Laura Mitchell

Position: FWA

**Laura Mitchell, MBA**  
20509 Alderleaf Terrace, Germantown, MD 20874  
E-mail: Laura@LauraMitchell.org  
Telephone 410 422 2694

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT OF  
Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings – Requirements - SB0432**

Submitted by Laura Mitchell, Individual  
to the Maryland House Ways and Means Committee

February 5, 2024

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Respected Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am Laura Mitchell, a mother of two adult children and a teen grandchild in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. My youngest son and my grandchild are both neurodivergent persons with significant trauma histories for whom unexpected disruptions, such as emergency drills, have had very significant consequences. It is for them, and others with similar conditions and histories, that I urge you to support SB0432 Public Schools – Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings – Requirements, with one small amendment: that schools be required to collaborate with a qualified mental health provider, as well as law enforcement, in the planning and subsequent phases of these drills.

When my grandchild was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, I was in the building supporting the school as a PTA member when a tornado warning was issued, and everyone had to shelter in the storm safe area. My grandchild ended up across the hall from the copy room where I was. It was relatively quiet, but louder than a normal classroom once everyone was seated. I could see her anxiety building. She began holding her hands over her ears, rocking back and forth, and her wonderful teacher began rubbing her back to help calm her. It was near the end of the day, and I was able to take her home once the threat had passed and we spent hours calming and reassuring her throughout the night. She was still too shaken to go to school the next day (Friday) but returned on Monday.

Early in her 6<sup>th</sup> grade year, I was in the school media center running the book fair when an unannounced active shooter drill was called. I was again able to observe my grandchild's response as the excitement of shopping at the book fair suddenly became fear and angst. She began crying, rocking, covering her ears with her hands and began to panic. I, along with a

couple of classmates tried to comfort and distract her, but we also had to be quiet per the drill instructions. When the drill ended there was no time to reconcile the sudden change from fun to fear, there was simply an announcement that the drill was concluded, and teachers and students should resume their “normal activities”. She was so traumatized by the drill that she stayed with me for the remainder of the day and was unable to return to school the next day. She had nightmares about being shot at school for over two weeks. Withing that time, her mental health deteriorated to the point that she had to be hospitalized for suicidal ideation because she could not stop thinking about this danger she now perceived as real at her school. She was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) soon after her release from the hospital stay precipitated by this situation. We pursued and received an IEP and I insisted that prior notice of all drills be provided to her and her guardians as one of her accommodations. That helps her and her experience before her diagnosis highlights the importance of minimizing impacts on everyone involved in the drills, beyond those with known conditions or trauma.

Emergencies happen and we have little ability to avoid those. We can, however, control the negative impacts of emergency preparedness drills with better planning and more thoughtful implementation that includes identifying persons most at risk for traumatization, providing prior notice to everyone who will participate, and mitigating any adverse responses or trauma that results from the drills with calming activities and immediate access to professional mental health providers.

Planning for drills, particularly active shooter safety drills, must include thoughtful foreplaning and implementation with a full complement of professionals to consider the impacts and develop a multidisciplinary plan that minimizes trauma to participants. This includes law enforcement, school staff and administrators, mental health professionals, families, and students where appropriate. Identifying persons most at risk for traumatization from the heightened emotions, sounds, and movements that occur during a drill provides the opportunity to determine if a drill is the best means for that individual to learn the intended lessons or if a tabletop exercise or other method would serve them better and avoid potential stress or trauma.

I believe trauma-informed planning, prior notice, and post drill trauma mitigation would have helped my granddaughter avoid the mental health crisis the drill precipitated. I also believe this will help other students and staff – with or without a diagnosed condition, known vulnerability, or history of trauma – avoid similar or worse outcomes.

Evidence that these active shooter drills improve school safety is nearly nonexistent. Many studies have produced recommendations and best practices for minimizing and mitigating the negative impacts of the drills, including those recommended in SB0432. I leave you with several resources below and urge the passage of SB0432 with the requested amendment to engage mental health professionals in every phase from planning to post drill care.



Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Mitchell, M.B.A. (she/her)

410-422-2694

- [Montgomery Goes Purple](#) Co-Founder
- Montgomery County [Alcohol and Other Drug Addiction Advisory Council](#) (AODAAC) Immediate Past Chair, Appointed Voting Member; Participant in Prevention, Legislative, and Treatment & Recovery Subcommittees
- Montgomery County Mental Health Advisory Committee Liason for AODAAC
- Montgomery County Behavioral Health Crisis Leadership Collaborative
- Montgomery County Prevention Alliance (Formerly Opioid Intervention Workgroup)
- Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Coalition
- [Parity At 10](#): EQUAL INSURANCE COVERAGE OF SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS. IT'S THE LAW. (Contact the [Legal Action Center](#) if you have experienced difficulty accessing Substance Use or Mental Health treatment.)
- [National PTA](#):
  - [Diversity Inclusion and Outreach 2021-2023 Committee Member](#)
  - 2021-2022 Whole Child Fellow, [Center for Family Engagement](#); Creator of MCCPTA C.A.R.E.S., supporting staff at schools in crisis.
  - [2022 NPTA Shirley Igo Advocate of the Year](#)
- [MCCPTA](#):
  - [Vice President of Advocacy](#)
  - [Operating Budget Committee Chair](#)
  - [Substance Use Prevention Committee Chair](#)
  - 2022 MCCPTA Advocate of the Year
  - 2023 MCPS Superintendent's Community Champion for Children Award
- [Wheaton HS PTSA](#) Immediate Past President

### Resources

Brock, S. E., Nickerson, A. B., Reeves, M. A. L., Conolly, C. N., Jimerson, S. R., Pesce, R. C., & Lazzaro, B. R. (2016). *School crisis prevention and intervention: The PREP<sub>a</sub>RE model (2nd ed.)*. National Association of School Psychologists.

NASP and NASRO. (2021). *Best practice considerations for schools in armed assailant drills for schools* [Brief]. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/armed-assailant-drills>

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students. (2013). *Guide for developing high quality school emergency operations plans (K-12)*. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/rem-s-k-12-guide.pdf>

**SB0432.pdf**

Uploaded by: Suzanne Duffy

Position: UNF

Say NO to SB0432, we don't need the state evaluating our children's mental health. This is completely unnecessary. MENTAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE is ANTI-Privacy and anti individual rights, BAD BAD BAD. We also DON'T need the state doing "active shooter drills" in our schools. If you didn't do these active shooter drills in our schools (private and public) then you wouldn't need to be collecting data on vulnerable **minors**. Since you are going to push this through anyway, **GIVE AN OPT OUT**. How many parents are pulling their children from public schools? Private is better, homeschooling an ideal in a world and **state gone mad**. Maybe we should be doing Mental Health Surveillance to any all politicians, from the top down! Any child that fails your mental health surveillance, well where does that personal minor data report go?

**SB\_432\_Active Shooter Drills\_KennedyKrieger\_LOI.pdf**

Uploaded by: Emily Arneson

Position: INFO



Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities  
at Kennedy Krieger Institute  
*Building Partnerships. Changing Lives.*

February 7, 2024

The Honorable Brian Feldman  
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: Letter of Information on SB432 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

Dear Chairman Feldman,

The Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) at Kennedy Krieger Institute appreciates your introduction of the SB432 - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings – Requirements bill. This legislation is an important step in creating safer school environments for students and staff, including students and staff with disabilities.

As you are aware, the MCDD is proud to be Maryland's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) and a member of the national Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). MCDD links the community to vital services, research, and information to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Our mission is to provide leadership that advances the inclusion of people with intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities through preservice preparation and training; research and evaluation; community service and technical assistance; and information dissemination. This includes ensuring that people with disabilities can live and learn safely within their communities.

In collaboration with the National Center for Disability, Equity, and Intersectionality, the MCDD performed a legislative review of school safety policies throughout the nation. In the policies we found, there was minimal mention of students with disabilities when discussing active shooter drills. Some policies failed to specify the difference in approach of these drills for students with disabilities that we believe need to be explored when developing best practices.

We are in full support of this legislation and ask that the committee make students and staff with disabilities a direct priority when studying the effectiveness and psychological impact of active shooter drills. Students with disabilities often require accommodations and/or modifications to access school safety protocols safely and reliably. For example, those with physical disabilities and mobility aids may require alternate evacuation routes, individuals sensitive to loud sounds may require headphones during

For more information, visit [mcdd.kennedykrieger.org](https://mcdd.kennedykrieger.org)

noisy evacuations, and students with behavioral support needs may require extra supports to address elopement concerns.

The MCDD supports the removal of any activities that may cause the drill to be traumatic for students or school personnel, such as drills including loud sounds or live exercises with individuals role-playing as an active shooter or victim. Additionally, we support effective communication requirement for such drills, providing adequate and appropriate information about drill scheduling to the students, families, and school staff prior to the drills as well as access to appropriate support services/accommodations during and after the drill for all students and staff, particularly those who identify as having a disability.

We encourage the committee to meet with stakeholders in the disability community to discuss potential next steps of the legislation, including in an advisory capacity to ensure the accessibility of any evacuation or lockdown emergency protocols.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maureen van Stone" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Maureen van Stone, Esq., M.S.  
Assistant Vice President  
Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities  
Kennedy Krieger Institute