

SB0245 Public Schools Resource Officers.pdf

Uploaded by: Britt, Adiena

Position: FAV

SB0245 Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Requirements and Prohibitions

Stance: Support

Testimony: My name is Adiena C. Britt and I reside in the 45th Legislative District of Baltimore City. I am writing to lend my support for Bill SB0245 limiting the access of School Resource Officers to school buildings, limiting the ability to participate in disciplinary measures, and adjustments to the uniform and gun wearing appearance of these officers.

As the mother of a child that suffered a traumatic instance of police brutality in our own home, having School Resource Officers that look and act like a police force within the school building was extremely traumatic for him. With thousands of our students experiencing negative encounters with law enforcement over the course of their lifetimes, through no fault of their own; school buildings should be a sanctuary free from the imagery of Law Enforcement personnel. As they are currently utilized, School Resource Officers only serve to reinforce the notion of school to prison pipeline which negatively impacts Black and Brown children at far higher rates than their White counterparts. Situations that used to be handled by school administrators and parents are now handled by a make-shift "police force". I would love to see the School Resource Officers Department disbanded, and removed completely from our Schools; but if this is the compromise, I'm all for it. I don't feel that we should be forcing our State's children to become acclimated to a form of police state where they are seeing Law Enforcement housed in every place that they interact with during their lifetimes.

Thank you.

Adiena C. Britt

6014 Old Harford Rd.

Baltimore, MD 21214

Testimony In Support of SB 245 SRO Requirements Ja

Uploaded by: Ceruolo, Rich

Position: FAV

January 25, 2021

Maryland Senate
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD. 21401

In Support of SB 245: Public Schools – School Resource Officers – Requirements and Prohibitions.

Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs and Judiciary Proceedings Committees.

As a parent and advocate for persons with disabilities, I can't help but support a bill like this one being proposed. The safety of children during the school day should always be a high priority to all.

Too many times in recent years we have seen videos of children being handled in rough and inappropriate ways by school staff and RSOs in their schools. Too many times these children are left with both physical scars as well as emotional scars from these types of encounters. Too often these children have invisible disabilities and emotional challenges that inhibit their ability to self-regulate their behavior. Too often these same children have brown or black skin. Too often the child's needs are not being met by their school's staff members, and they are acting out due to lack of supports specific to their challenges. These children are not damaged or 'bad to the bone'. They are children struggling to meet everyone's expectations in a system that is cookie cutter, and not tailored to their individual needs.

They are not disposable human beings. They are real children, with real issues and possess real untapped potential. Please provide the funding to train all school staff members on better ways of handling our children. Promote trauma informed approaches to education policy making which have been developed to assist the school staff, RSOs and students on ways to work together in less confrontational ways. Lessening the likelihood that students or school staff will be injured during encounters when the student is struggling during the school day. Please help to support them so that they can gain the skills and education so that they can reach their full potential.

School – Prison Pipeline: The pipeline that exists between our schools, and our prison system is very real. Many children with a variety of learning and emotional challenges end up here through no fault of their own. And it is not the outcome that we want to see for any of our children. Let's not create prisoners, a prison atmosphere or use prison like methods when handling our children.

Please support Senate Bill 245 and help RSOs get the training and skills needed to be better tooled to handle the challenges, and needs of ALL of our children while they are on school properties.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of my testimony today.

Mr. Richard Ceruolo
Parent and advocate for persons living with disabilities | Parent Advocacy Consortium

SB0245 SRO Requirements and Prohibitions Testimon

Uploaded by: Kronser, Lori

Position: FAV

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Bill #: SB0245

**Bill Title: Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Requirements and Prohibitions
January 27, 2021**

****SUPPORT****

Dear Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis & Anne Arundel County in SUPPORT of *Bill #: SB0245, Bill Title: Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Requirements and Prohibitions* that would prohibit a school resource officer (SRO) from entering a school building except if summoned by a school administrator to respond to an emergency involving violence or the threat of violence, to participate in certain training, or to use the restroom. SB0245 would also prohibit SROs from participating in routine school discipline of a student, require SROs to conceal any firearms except under certain circumstances, and require SROs to wear civilian clothing while on school grounds.

School safety is an extremely complex issue and consideration of students' safety must extend beyond threats of armed violence in schools. Data shows SROs do not protect our children from school shootings.¹ SROs do have a direct impact on students' mental and emotional health, along with negatively impacting academic outcomes. SROs use their discretion to criminalize ordinary youthful behavior or behavior that is disability-related, which should be handled by school administrators. Students of color and/or with disabilities are disproportionately referred to law enforcement for school-based incidents.² A single arrest can impact a student's achievement, and lead to a 25% increase in the likelihood of dropping out of school.³

Pre-COVID, approximately 72% of children in the United States experienced at least one major stressful life event such as witnessing violence or experiencing abuse by the age of 18, and these numbers are disproportionately higher for students of color.⁴ Children who have experienced past trauma can interpret minor situations as threatening and respond with agitation and anxiety. SROs misconstrue this as "non-compliance" and escalate the situation, causing further trauma.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a glimpse into a world where SROs do not exist. As school buildings shut down across the country (with the result being no school-based arrests), between February

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² African-American and Latino boys with disabilities represent only three percent of students nationally, but account for 12 percent of school arrests. African-American boys are often labeled as "emotionally disturbed" or "bad" when non-compliant behavior occurs - whether or not they have an emotional or behavioral disability - and those behaviors disproportionately lead to a law enforcement response rather than a supportive response through appropriate accommodations.

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1, 2020 and April 1, 2020, youth admissions to juvenile detention facilities decreased by 52%,⁵ along with the percentage of youth of color in detention also shrinking.

Yet we are not writing in support of SB0245 because of all of the national statistics. Maryland State Department of Education data show an 87% increase in arrests in Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) from 2016-17 to 2018-19. In the same period, African-American students were consistently arrested at 2-3 times the rate of white students statewide. **More students were arrested in AACPS in 2018-19 (i.e., 356 students) than in any other county school system in Maryland.**⁶ According to *The Capital Gazette*, police representatives and AACPS Deputy Superintendent Jackson have **admitted this stark increase in arrests is due to an increase in SRO presence.**^{7,8} Therefore, in a school system like AACPS where punitive discipline is extremely disproportionately directed at African-American students,⁹ the presence of SROs leads directly to the very criminalization of Blackness that harms our students.

In closing, we wanted to share one more set of statistics: African-Americans are more likely to be shot by law enforcement in split-second decisions, and trained police miss their targets more than 4 out of 5 times in gun fire. No child should enter their school afraid of being harassed by the authorities in the building, yet alone scared that they might be shot by an SRO.

Maryland has an opportunity to make education safer for our kids by removing SROs from our schools. Currently, Maryland spends \$10 million on SROs, whose discriminatory practices cause harm and reduce community safety. If Maryland disinvests in SROs, it would be able to invest in social workers, resources for special education, restorative approaches to resolving conflict, psychologists, and counselors.

Children should be focused on learning, while we focus on their safety and well-being. This is the time to take action: stop calling in SROs to punish our children of color and/or with disabilities, isolate them from their peers, separate them from school, and enter them into the criminal justice system.

For the reasons stated above, I strongly urge this committee to vote FAVORABLY on Bill #: SB0245, Bill Title: Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Requirements and Prohibitions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lori Kronser
12800 Holiday Lane
Bowie, MD 20716

⁵ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Survey: 52% Drop in Admissions to Youth Detention in Two Months Matches Reduction Over 13 Years," aecf.org, Accessed July 7, 2020.

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SB0245 FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Ochs , India

Position: FAV

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Bill #: SB0245

**Bill Title: Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Requirements and Prohibitions
January 27, 2021**

****FAVORABLE****

Dear Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Members,

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School safety is an extremely complex issue and consideration of students' safety must extend beyond threats of armed violence in schools. Data shows SROs do not protect our children from school shootings.¹ SROs do have a direct impact on students' mental and emotional health, along with negatively impacting academic outcomes. SROs use their discretion to criminalize ordinary youthful behavior or behavior that is disability-related, which should be handled by school administrators. Students of color and/or with disabilities are disproportionately referred to law enforcement for school-based incidents.² A single arrest can impact a student's achievement, and lead to a 25% increase in the likelihood of dropping out of school.³

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past trauma can interpret minor situations as threatening and respond with agitation and anxiety. SROs misconstrue this as “non-compliance” and escalate the situation, causing further trauma.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a glimpse into a world where SROs do not exist. As school buildings shut down across the country (with the result being no school-based arrests), between February 1, 2020 and April 1, 2020, youth admissions to juvenile detention facilities decreased by 52%,⁵ along with the percentage of youth of color in detention also shrinking.

Yet we are not writing in support of SB0245 because of all of the national statistics. Maryland State Department of Education data show an 87% increase in arrests in Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) from 2016-17 to 2018-19. In the same period, African-American students were consistently arrested at 2-3 times the rate of white students statewide. **More students were arrested in AACPS in 2018-19 (i.e., 356 students) than in any other county school system in Maryland.**⁶ According to *The Capital Gazette*, police representatives and AACPS Deputy Superintendent Jackson have **admitted this stark increase in arrests is due to an increase in SRO presence.**^{7,8} Therefore, in a school system like AACPS where punitive discipline is extremely disproportionately directed at African-American students,⁹ the presence of SROs leads directly to the very criminalization of Blackness that harms our students.

In closing, we wanted to share one more set of statistics: African-Americans are more likely to be shot by law enforcement in split-second decisions, and trained police miss their targets more than 4 out of 5 times in gun fire. No child should enter their school afraid of being harassed by the authorities in the building, yet alone scared that they might be shot by an SRO.

Maryland has an opportunity to make education safer for our kids by removing SROs from our schools. Currently, Maryland spends \$10 million on SROs, whose discriminatory practices cause harm and reduce community safety. If Maryland disinvests in SROs, it would be able to invest in social workers, resources for special education, restorative approaches to resolving conflict, psychologists, and counselors. **Children should be focused on learning, while we focus on their safety and well-being. This is the time to take action: stop calling in SROs to punish our children of color and/or with disabilities, isolate them from their peers, separate them from school, and enter them into the criminal justice system.**

For the reasons stated above, we strongly urge this committee to vote FAVORABLY on Bill #: SB0245, Bill Title: Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Requirements and Prohibitions.

Respectfully Submitted,

India Ochs

Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis and Anne Arundel County (SURJ3A)

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TESTIMONY FOR SB0245 - Public Schools - School Res

Uploaded by: Plante, Cecilia

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0245
PUBLIC SCHOOLS – SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS – REQUIREMENTS AND
PROHIBITIONS

Bill Sponsor: Senator Ellis

Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0245 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.

Metal detectors. Police in Schools. This is what our children have to put up with every day that they are in school. These things don't seem to affect some students, but for others, the fact that there are officers walking around every day has a very large effect on them. Imagine having a police officer walking the halls with a gun, who can decide to insert themselves in any situation. That is intimidating.

Data shows that certain children receive far more attention and 'discipline' than other children in school, which can affect their performance and over time, cause them to disengage from school. We send our children to school to learn. We should remove officers from the school unless they are specifically called in by the principal to resolve an altercation that involves violence or the threat of violence. Otherwise, they should not be there.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB0245 SUPPORT SRO Prohib LG.pdf

Uploaded by: Sell, Jennifer

Position: FAV

Dear Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Members,

I live in District 21 and am a longtime resident of Maryland. I am a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis & Anne Arundel County and am writing in SUPPORT of *Bill # SB0245, Bill Title: Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Requirements and Prohibitions*.

This bill would prohibit a school resource officer (SRO) from entering a school building except if summoned by a school administrator to respond to an emergency involving violence or the threat of violence, to participate in certain training, or to use the restroom. SB0245 would also prohibit SROs from participating in routine school discipline of a student, require SROs to conceal any firearms except under certain circumstances, and require SROs to wear civilian clothing while on school grounds.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a glimpse into a world where SROs do not exist. As school buildings shut down across the country (with the result being no school-based arrests),

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Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Girdner
941 Fall Ridge Way
Gambrills, MD 21054

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SB245.pdf

Uploaded by: Sell, Jennifer

Position: FAV

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Bill #: SB0245

**Bill Title: Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Requirements and Prohibitions
January 27, 2021**

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Jennifer Sell

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444 Lynwood Dr
Severna Park, MD 21146

MCJPA Police-Free Schools - Policy Brief.pdf

Uploaded by: Cherayil, Monisha

Position: FWA



Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability

REPLACE POLICE WITH STUDENT SUPPORTS

COUNSELOR NOT COPS: TO KEEP SCHOOLS SAFE, REPLACE POLICE WITH STUDENT SUPPORTS

Every Maryland school district utilizes school police in spite of evidence that police presence criminalizes students for minor behaviors without addressing serious safety threats, needlessly perpetuating the school-to-prison pipeline.

There is No Reliable Evidence that School Police Keep Students and Educators Safe

- Research has not shown that police presence reduces school shootings or other violence.¹
- One study found that an increase in school police presence did not decrease any category of school-based offenses.²
- Students' perception that school police treat them unfairly can have a counterproductive effect on student behavior.³
- School police have made Black students feel less safe because of over-policing and racialized police violence.⁴

Police Presence in Schools Increases Student Arrests for Minor Offenses

- In national studies, students in schools with a police officer are five times more likely to be arrested for disorderly conduct and twice as likely to be referred to law enforcement for run-

of-the-mill fistfights than students in schools without one.³

- In Maryland, approximately 70% of school arrests are for fistfights without weapons and offenses like disruption/disrespect, alcohol/tobacco, and trespassing. The remainder are mostly for simple drug possession.⁵

School Policing Disproportionately Harms Black Students, and Students with Disabilities

- In Maryland, Black students receive 56% of school-based arrests statewide despite representing only about a third of the student population, even though data demonstrates that Black students

A coalition of over 75 groups from across the state are calling on Maryland legislators to support strong, renewed demands for police reform and accountability:

- 1 Repeal in full the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights.
- 2 Reform the Public Information Act to allow disclosure of all complaints of police misconduct.
- 3 Establish a statewide use of force policy that will prevent officers from using force unless it is necessary.
- 4 **Remove school resource officers from schools.**
- 5 Return control of the Baltimore City Police Department to Baltimore City residents.

POLICE-FREE SCHOOLS

misbehave at the same rate as their peers.⁵

- In Maryland, students with Individual Education Programs (IEP) receive 23% of school-based arrests* despite comprising 12% of the student population.⁵

What are Effective Measures for Keeping Schools Safe?

Educators, researchers, and law enforcement have found that strategies to support students' positive behavior and strengthen relationships among students, staff, and parents are effective for keeping schools safe. Proven and promising strategies include:

- Restorative approaches^{6, 7, 8}
- Trauma-informed approaches^{9, 10}
- Provision of wraparound services, including through community schools¹¹
- Special education planning and implementation^{12, 13}
- Hiring of mental health specialists, counselors, and community resource coordinators^{9, 10, 14}

If Maryland redirected the \$10 million per year it currently invests in school police, it could support districts to successfully implement these alternatives.

*This figure does not capture all arrests of students with disabilities; 229 school-based arrests, or 7% of all such arrests in the state, involved students with disabilities who have 504 Plans instead of IEPs.

Find more information about the five necessary police reforms in Maryland, and the more than 75 organizations calling for them: aclu-md.org/reimaginepolicing

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SB 245 - Favorable with Amendments 1-24-21.pdf

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SB 245

Public Schools – School Resource Officers – Requirements and Prohibitions

January 27, 2021, 11:00 AM

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization which seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Education Stability Project advocates racial equity in public education by combatting the overuse of exclusionary school discipline practices, like suspension, expulsion, and school policing, that disproportionately target Black and brown children and push students out of school. If amended as proposed, SB 245 can meaningfully shift Maryland's public schools away from reliance on school police – which have not been shown to keep students and educators safe and needlessly funnel students into the school-to-prison pipeline – and towards implementation of effective measures for improving school safety, including student mental health services, wraparound supports, and restorative approaches.

Regular Police Presence Makes Schools Less Safe, Not More, Particularly for Black Children and Children with Disabilities. Every Maryland school district stations police in its public schools on the theory that doing so will stop school shootings or reduce other types of violence. In the enclosed policy brief, the [Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability](#) – a coalition of over 90 organizations committed to meaningful police reform in our state – demonstrates that the true impact of the model is different:

- Police presence in schools has not been shown to prevent school shootings or prevent other violence
- Over 70% of school arrests in Maryland are for fights without weapons, disruption/disrespect, trespassing, and similarly low-level offenses; the remainder are mostly for simple drug possession
- Black students receive 56% of school arrests in Maryland, even though they are only a third of the student population, and research has found no differences in student behavior across race
- Students with IEPs receive 23% of school arrests in Maryland, even though they are only 12% of the student population

The Public Justice Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and as such does not endorse or oppose any political party or candidate for elected office.

- Students arrested in school are [22 percentage points](#) more likely to drop out than peers who share similar characteristics but do not face arrest

In short, police presence in schools needlessly pushes students – particularly Black students and students with disabilities – out of school and into a pipeline to prison for engaging in developmentally-anticipated childhood and adolescent behavior, without improving school safety.

Expanded Student Mental Health Services, Wraparound Supports, and Restorative Approaches Keep Schools Safe – But These Strategies Are Underfunded. Schools can employ proven strategies to keep students and educators safe without causing harm. Restorative Approaches, for example, build positive relationships within school communities, facilitating the prevention and resolution of conflict and resulting in [decreases in suspensions and improvements in school climate](#). Social-Emotional Learning teaches students character skills, such as self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, empathy, and responsible decision-making, and has been shown to [decrease emotional distress and violent behaviors/conduct problems](#). And, Trauma-Informed Practices help to minimize fight-or-flight responses for students who have suffered trauma, [preventing behavior crises and making schools feel “safer” and “calmer.”](#) But to implement these measures, schools need counselors, social workers, psychologists, restorative practitioners, and community school coordinators – and in Maryland, they have [far from enough](#).

SB 245 Appropriately Recognizes the Failures of the School Policing Model But Must Go Further to Make a Meaningful Impact. SB 245 correctly recognizes that the school policing model has failed Maryland students, but as drafted, the bill contains several flaws that will prevent it from achieving necessary reform:

- The bill authorizes school police to be stationed outside school buildings, and to enter those buildings when called for an “emergency involving violence or the threat of violence.” Because “violence or the threat of violence” is undefined, schools can easily rely on this language to summon police to arrest students engaged in run-of-the-mill schoolyard fights, horseplay, or adolescent bravado or disrespectful language – behavior that may warrant disciplinary action, but not involvement with the juvenile or criminal system. Indeed, as noted, a large portion of school arrests currently target precisely these behaviors, and this bill is unlikely to change that.
- The bill authorizes school police to enter school buildings for training, even though – as employees of police departments in all jurisdictions but Baltimore City – they can and should receive training at the departments themselves, rather than in school buildings. Even in Baltimore City, where school police are employees of the district, training could happen in district offices rather than in schools. The more time police spend inside school buildings and interacting with students, the more likely that they will use law enforcement strategies – including interrogation, arrest, handcuffing, and force – to respond to student misbehavior, since law enforcement remains these officers’ primary duty and function.
- The bill creates no mechanism to ensure oversight of or adherence to its limitations on school police activity, such that these limitations will likely prove meaningless in practice.

- The bill expressly authorizes school police to carry firearms inside school buildings, cementing this dangerous practice into law; [arming school-based personnel has not been shown to deter school shootings and creates a serious risk of accidental gunfire and injury to students or staff](#). Moreover, this provision conflicts with existing law, Md. Educ. § 4-318, and Baltimore City policy prohibiting City Schools police from carrying firearms in school during school hours, which the General Assembly – lead by the Baltimore City Delegation – has repeatedly rejected attempts to alter.
- The bill fails to redirect the mandatory \$10 million/year state SRO fund (Md. Educ. § 7-1508), through which Maryland makes a substantial investment of state dollars in the failed school policing model, or to invest in effective safety measures, like student mental health services, wraparound supports, or restorative approaches.

SB 245 would more effectively accomplish its goal of limiting police involvement in schools and supporting schools to implement more effective safety strategies if it included the following changes:

- Redirecting the \$10 million per year from the SRO fund towards student mental health services, wraparound supports, and restorative approaches, so that school districts can hire counselors, social workers, school psychologists, restorative approaches practitioners, community school coordinators, and implement trauma-informed practices.
- Requiring reporting on the use-of-force by school security and on calls to City or County police for incidents in school.
- Strengthening the School Safety Subcabinet Advisory Board to the Maryland Center for School Safety – which oversees issues of safety in schools – to include families impacted by school-based arrest, and experts in student mental health and conflict resolution.
- Prohibiting school districts from contracting with police departments to station police at schools – while still permitting schools to coordinate emergency response with City or County police, to employ unarmed guards (without arresting power) at schools, and to utilize non-personnel safety measures (e.g. door locks)
- Repealing the creation of the Baltimore City Public Schools standalone police force.

The Public Justice Center urges the committee to adopt these amendments to SB 245, and issue a favorable report on the legislation as amended. If you have any questions, please contact Monisha Cherayil at 410-625-9409 x 234 or cherayilm@publicjustice.org.

SB245 OPD Testimony SUPPORT with Amendments.pdf

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Position: FWA



POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: SB0245: Public Schools – School Resource Officers—Requirements and Prohibitions

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

DATE: January 27, 2021

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 245, Public Schools—School Resource Officers—Requirements and Prohibitions, with amendments.

This bill is important because it acknowledges the harms caused by the presence of armed police, colloquially called school resources officers (SROs), in our schools. As public defenders, we work every day with children charged in juvenile and adult court, oftentimes for incidents that take place in school. As our line attorneys see, the presence of SROs directly impacts the school to prison pipeline, easily funneling Black students into the criminal legal system. In December 2018, the Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices issued its final report and collaborative action plan.¹ This report detailed how “the use of SROs is linked to increased rates of exclusionary discipline and the criminalization of relatively trivial student behavior. . . . SROs are not trained as educators, but as sworn law enforcement officers with the authority to arrest people. The most common arrests in school are simple assault...and the vague category of ‘disorderly conduct,’ which could be a temper tantrum, cursing, or talking back to a teacher. In other words, ‘children develop arrest records for acting like children.’”² One study has shown when comparing schools with and without police that students are five times more likely to face arrest for disorderly conduct in schools with SROs; additionally schools with SROs are more likely to report non-serious incidents to police than those lacking SROs.³

This is borne out by the most recent arrest data from the Maryland State Department of Education, where during the 2018–19 school year, there were 3,141 student arrests.⁴ Over one-quarter of these arrests, 28%, were for non-violent offenses like theft, trespassing, destruction of property, possession of controlled substances, disruption, and even disrespect. More than half of these arrests, 53%, were for fighting. Overall, SROs conducted 83.6% of the overall arrests. And ultimately, at least 59% and as many as 94% of these cases were referred to the

¹ Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices, Final Report and Collaborative Action Plan . (Hereinafter, Commission Report). *Available at* <http://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/AEEBB/CommissionSchoolPrisonPipeline.pdf>

² Commission Report, at 26. (Hereinafter, Commission Report).

³ DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN, A RESOURCE GUIDE ON COUNSELORS NOT COPS 4 (September 2016), http://www.dignityinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Resource_Guide-on-CNC-1.pdf

⁴ Data publicly available at: <http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DSFSS/SSSP/StudentArrest/MarylandPublicSchoolsArrestDataSY20182019.pdf>

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Department of Juvenile Services for potential prosecution of children for behavior during school.⁵ In short, in Maryland we see how the overwhelming majority of school based arrests are for trivial behavior that is typical of adolescent development, and the majority of these arrests are conducted by SROs.

Not only do we see every day in our work how police in schools funnel children directly into the courtroom to be prosecuted, but we also hear regularly from our clients how the mere presence of law enforcement changes the learning environment and escalates simple disagreements, contributing to a culture of criminalization and antagonism in schools. Students surveyed during the drafting of the Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline echoed similar concerns. Students noted that they “felt stressed about the idea of adding more School Resource Officers on campus” and “agreed that having additional armed officers was not the solution to school safety.”⁶ Students also discussed their uneasiness around law enforcement and feeling the presence of racism in their schools.⁷ Police presence in schools contributes to an overall zero tolerance and punitive learning environment, which has “stigmatizing consequences for all students,” particularly Black and Latino students, as it “reorients school discipline to approach students as potential criminals.”⁸ “There are indications that frequent police contact, even of a minor nature, has a great impact on the perceptions Black and Latino youth have of themselves, school, and law enforcement. If school socializes children to believe that they, themselves, are the target of police in their schools, students no longer see schools as places that nurture their development or teachers as adults who care about their future....Children disengage where they are not safe, and for many, schools have become unsafe places.”⁹ Even when students are not arrested, the experience of being policed in school can fundamentally change how a young person views themselves and experiences in education going forward.

The common response is that police are not present in schools to police children, but rather to protect them from outside threats and intruders. While the underlying disciplinary and arrest data directly refutes this point, it is important to underscore that no national or Maryland study has found that the presence of school police decreases violent incidents at school. Under the Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018, schools can either have SROs stationed at schools or rely on “adequate local law enforcement coverage” to respond in case of a school emergency. The reality is that 75% of Maryland public schools rely on adequate law enforcement coverage *instead of* an assigned school resource officer.¹⁰ The notion that SROs are mandatory to keep our schools safe is simply untrue, and not even the reality at the overwhelming majority of Maryland public schools.

Finally, we note that the movement to remove armed police officers from our schools comes at a time when we are questioning as a nation the outsized and dangerous role of police in our everyday life, after the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless others at the

⁵ The discrepancy comes from MSDE noting that it is “unknown” whether 1,095 arrests were referred to the Department of Juvenile Services. *Id.* at 14.

⁶ Commission Report, at 76.

⁷ Commission Report, at 76.

⁸ American Civil Liberties Union, “Bullies in Blue: Origins and Consequences of School Policing,” at 30. Available at <https://www.aclu.org/report/bullies-blue-origins-and-consequences-school-policing>.

⁹ “Bullies in Blue” at 31.

¹⁰ Maryland Center for School Safety Adequate Law Enforcement Coverage Report, 2019–20 school year, at 4. Available at <https://schoolsafety.maryland.gov/Documents/Reports-Docs/SRO%20Adequate%20Coverage%20Report-2019.pdf>.

hands of the police. The issues of police brutality are close to home as well: in January 2020, Prince George's County Police Officer Michael Owen shot and killed a handcuffed man in his police car¹¹; this is the same police department that selects and sends SROs to Prince George's County Public Schools. The notion that officers coming from the same police departments at the center of Maryland's police reform debate are equipped to provide a safe and secure environment for students to thrive and learn is incompatible with public evidence of excessive force by the police departments.¹²

Excessive force is just as much a concern in schools as it is in the broader community. Across the country we have seen instances of SROs being physically abusive towards students, including putting them in chokeholds, slamming them to the floor, assaulting them, using pain compliance techniques, tasing students, and handcuffing them as a mechanism of punishment and "treatment."¹³ In Maryland we have seen instances of school police officers using excessive force in recent history:

- Suitland High School, Prince George's County Public Schools, 2014 – A school police officer knelt down to pray, and then punched a 17 year old student in the face for allegedly possessing drugs
- Sherwood High School, Montgomery County Public Schools, 2016 – A school police officer placed a student in a headlock and pinned her to the floor at her senior prom because he believed she was intoxicated
- REACH Partnership School, Baltimore City Public Schools, 2016 – A school police officer is filmed punching and kicking a teenager for allegedly trespassing
- Gen. John Stricker Middle School, Baltimore County Public Schools, 2019 – A school police officer handcuffed a 12 year old autistic student for over 23 minutes, resulting in the student having a broken wrist

While the spirit of SB245 supports the call to rethink school safety, in its current drafting it does not go far enough. SB245 makes two major changes: (1) precludes SROs from entering the school building unless in response "to an emergency involving violence or the threat of violence"; (2) precludes SROs from participating in "the routine school discipline of a student." However, as currently written, SB245 does not define an "emergency involving violence or the threat of violence" or "routine school discipline." This therefore leaves to the discretion of school administrators what qualifies the involvement of SROs, which is what presently accounts for the over-policing of Black children in our schools. The Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline highlighted how in Maryland, "Black students were the *only* racial group arrested at a higher rate than their proportion of school enrollment at the state level and across

¹¹ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/01/28/maryland-police-officer-fatally-shoots-man-handcuffed-cruiser/4595519002/>

¹² Police Shootings: A Washington Post Investigation, WASHINGTON POST, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/content/nation/investigative/policeshootings.html>.; Ruben Castaneda, Officer Liable in Student's Killing, WASHINGTON POST, January 20, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/19/AR2006011902346.html>.; See also, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Between the World and Me, Part II (2015); See Prince George Memorandum of Agreement, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2010/12/15/Prince_George_memo_agree.pdf

¹³ Commission Report, at 26; *Bullies in Blue* at 22-24

districts.”¹⁴ This disparity comes not from different conduct by students, but from bias and inconsistent and inequitable implementation of discipline by adults, with Black and poor students being disciplined more often and more harshly than other students.¹⁵ The present drafting of SB245 does not disrupt this paradigm. Additionally, SB245 authorizes police to carry firearms inside of school buildings, making this dangerous practice law. Arming school based personnel increases the risk of serious harm and injury to students or staff, while not deterring school shootings or other dangerous activities.

We believe that the following amendments, which are supported by numerous studies and reports,¹⁶ would strengthen the present bill and would better align with the bill’s spirit, to stop the interactions between law enforcement officers and students that directly contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline:

- Redirecting the \$10 million per year from the SRO fund towards student mental health services, wraparound supports, and restorative approaches, so that school districts can hire counselors, social workers, school psychologists, restorative approaches practitioners, community school coordinators, and implement trauma-informed practices.
- Require reporting on the use-of-force by school security and on calls to City or County police for incidents in school.
- Strengthening the School Safety Subcabinet Advisory Board to include families impacted by school-based arrest, and experts in student mental health and conflict resolution.
- Prohibit school districts from contracting with police departments to station police at schools.
- Repeal the creation of the Baltimore City Public Schools standalone police force.

For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 245, with amendments.

¹⁴ Commission Report, at 28.

¹⁵ Commission Report, at 29.

¹⁶ Commission Report, at 43-53; Anna Maier et al, Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence (2017), https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community_Schools_Effective_REPORT.pdf; ACLU, Cops & No Counselors: How the Lack of School Mental Health Services is Harming Students (2019), https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/030419-acluschooldisciplinereport.pdf

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Testimony for the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

January 27, 2021

SB 245 – Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Requirements and Prohibitions

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

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The ACLU of Maryland supports SB 245, which would prohibit School Resource Officers (SRO) from entering the school building unless in response “to an emergency involving violence or the threat of violence” and prohibit SROs from participating in “the routine school discipline of a student.”

While the intentions of this bill are commendable in reimagining school safety, its current drafting does not address the issue of over-policing in schools. Every Maryland school district employs school police despite evidence that shows police presence in schools results in criminalizing students for minor age-appropriate behavior and creates the school-to-prison pipeline.

In Maryland, 70% of school arrests are for fistfights without weapons and offenses like disruption/disrespect, alcohol/tobacco, trespassing; the remainder are for simple drug possession.¹ A simple schoolyard fight leads to a student being arrested for second-degree assault. A student taking a classmates’ pencil winds up being a criminal charge for theft. These school arrests for minor offenses are a byproduct of police presence in schools, where students are five times more likely to be arrested for disorderly conduct than a school that does not have one.²

Black children and students with disabilities are disproportionately harmed by school policing. In Maryland, Black students receive 56% of school-based arrest, despite making up only one-third of the student population. Students with Individual Education Programs (IEP) also receive 23% of school-based arrests despite only comprising 12% of the student population.³

¹ "Maryland Public Schools Arrest Data 2018-2019 - Maryland State" <http://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2020/0623/MarylandPublicSchoolsArrestData20182019.pdf>. Accessed 25 Jan. 2021.

² "A RESOURCE GUIDE - Dignity in Schools." http://www.dignityinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Resource_Guide-on-CNC-1.pdf. Accessed 25 Jan. 2021.

³ *Supra* note 1

The following amendments, supported by numerous reports,⁴ are strategies to strengthen the current bill and aligns with the bills intended purpose, which is to have a positive school climate and to stop the interactions between law enforcement officers and students that directly contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline:

- Redirecting the \$10 million per year from the SRO fund towards student mental health services, wraparound supports, and restorative approaches, so that school districts can hire counselors, social workers, school psychologists, restorative approaches practitioners, community school coordinators, and implement trauma-informed practices.
- Require reporting on the use-of-force by school security and on calls to City or County police for incidents in school.
- Strengthening the School Safety Subcabinet Advisory Board to include families impacted by school-based arrest, and experts in student mental health and conflict resolution.
- Prohibit school districts from contracting with police departments to station police at schools.
- Repeal the creation of the Baltimore City Public Schools standalone police force.

For the foregoing reasons, ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report with amendments for SB 245.

⁴ "Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement" https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community_Schools_Effective_REPORT.pdf. Accessed 25 Jan. 2021.; See also "How the Lack of School Mental Health Staff Is Harming Students." https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/030419-acluschooldisciplinereport.pdf. Accessed 25 Jan. 2021.



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NASRO Testimony RE Maryland Senate Bill 245.pdf

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Testimony Submission from the National Association of School Resource Officers, Inc., RE Senate Bill 245

By Mo Canady, Executive Director, National Association of School Resource Officers, Inc.

The National Association of School Resource Officers, Inc. (NASRO) is a non-profit organization established to support school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators, and school safety/security professionals, as they work in partnership with their school district and school community to protect students, faculty and staff, and others in the school environment by providing the highest quality of training. NASRO offers the following courses: Basic SRO, Advanced SRO, SRO Supervisors and Managers, School Safety Officer, Adolescent Mental Health Training, and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.

Events occurring during the past year initiated the public's call for transformation of law enforcement, likely necessary in many communities. NASRO attests, however, that removal or restriction of school resource officers from serving as safety partners in the school environment would increase the risk of school violence and decrease opportunities for law enforcement to both build positive relationships with youth and educate and informally counsel students about public safety and law-related matters, all of which enhance school and community safety.

The National Police Foundation's Averted School Violence Database includes multiple situations in which school resource officers have successfully intervened to prevent acts of violence through investigation or tactical actions. Prevention of violence is critical to enabling student to learn. Just as important, however, are the principles of community policing regularly employed by school-based law enforcement which, when applied effectively, establish trust with students, collaboration with the school community, i.e., administrators, faculty and staff, parents, and students, and facilitate problem-solving on safety-related issues.

Often calls for the removal or reformation of school resource officers is premised on a lack of or limited understanding of the role school resource officers fulfill or the training school resource officers typically complete. NASRO endorses the following best practices.

School Resource Officers are Valuable When Best Practices are Followed

SROs are career law enforcement officers with sworn authority who are deployed by employing police departments or agencies in community-oriented policing assignments to work in collaboration with schools. Carefully-selected, specially-trained SROs provide many benefits, including:

- Development of potentially lifelong, positive relationships with students of all demographics.
- Prevention of on-campus violence through appropriate interventions before violence occurs.
- Mitigation of unpreventable violent incidents through immediate response.
- Reduction of the likelihood that a student will enter the justice system.
- Reduction of the need for schools to call 911.
- Increase of the likelihood that students (particularly those with mental-health issues) will get the help they need from social service and health care systems.
- Provision of valuable law-related information during classroom presentations.
- Prevention or minimization of property damage in the school and surrounding areas.

A community that is not experiencing all of the benefits listed above likely is not adhering to all the many best practices that the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) has developed.

Careful Selection

Communities must select SROs carefully, choosing those who have:

- At least three years of street experience;
- Demonstrated ability to work with youth (e.g. through volunteering in youth athletic programs);
- Clean disciplinary records;
- Excellent community relations skills.

In short, officers considered for SRO positions should be the “cream of the crop.” No agency should put officers in schools to get them off the streets (because of issues with their work or because of declining capabilities), as punishment, or without the officers’ strong desire to work in schools.

Specialized Training

School policing *must* be different than street patrol. Specialized training, therefore, is as essential to SROs as it is to other law enforcement specialties, such as hostage negotiation or SWAT. No community should assign a police officer to a school without first providing specialized training that includes:

- Understanding adolescent brain development and normal childhood behaviors;
- Recognizing and overcoming implicit bias;
- De-escalation, including finding and using alternatives to juvenile justice system referrals;
- Special education, including individualized education plans and their requirements;
- Recognizing and responding appropriately to signs of mental illness and trauma.

The 40-hour Basic SRO Course developed and offered by NASRO covers all the aforementioned and many other essential topics.

Other Best Practices

Written memoranda of understanding between police agencies and school systems are critical to effective school district-law enforcement partnerships. They must codify responsibilities and expectations. For example, both parties must agree that schools will not involve SROs in behavioral issues and disciplinary matters that educators should handle themselves in the absence of police.

School systems must train teachers and administrators on the appropriate roles of SROs and correct those personnel if they summon SROs inappropriately.

Best Practices Lead to Overwhelming Community Satisfaction

NASRO has found that communities which adhere to best practices overwhelmingly indicate satisfaction with their SRO programs. We believe that all communities — including those with significant policing issues — can have the same experience through reform, versus discontinuation of SRO programs.

Specific to Senate Bill 245

- School resource officers can best serve students and their school communities when they offer a visible presence on the school campus and are accessible to and can interact on an informal basis to foster relationships with students and faculty. Restriction of officers' presence in a school building would inhibit officer's ability to do so. They must necessarily have the ability to respond to an emergency involving violence or the threat of violence according to their agency's protocol in addition to in response to a summons by a school administrator or official.
- NASRO supports that school resource officers should complete specialized instruction approved by the local school district and the law enforcement agency, which adheres to the best practices set forth in this testimony.
- School resource officers are on-duty law enforcement officers, and the wearing of civilian clothing and concealment of firearms may not be practical. In situations which pose an imminent threat, officers' uniformed presence can serve as a deterrent factor and can help everyone to quickly identify the acting officer as a law enforcement authority. It is important to remember that safety threats frequently involve individuals who are not students. NASRO believes decisions regarding concealment of firearms and the uniform apparel of school resource officers are best determined by the local school district which is best aware of the culture, climate, and needs of its school communities.
- NASRO endorses the proposal that a school resource officer may not participate in the routine school discipline of a student.

SB245_CASE_UFAV_DeHart

Uploaded by: DeHart, Thomas

Position: UNF



COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATIVE & SUPERVISORY EMPLOYEES

305 Washington Ave., Suite 300 • Towson, Maryland 21204
(443) 322-CASE • www.case-bcps.org

January 27, 2021

Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chairman
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB 245 – Public Schools-School Resource Officers-Requirements and Prohibitions – Oppose

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 245. On behalf of the Council of Administrative & Supervisory Employees (CASE) in the Baltimore County Public Schools, representing 600 members including 174 school principals, we ask that you **oppose** this bill as written.

As an early adopter of the School Resource Officer program, Baltimore County Public School's partnership with the Baltimore County Police Department has grown over 20 years to provide all middle and high schools with resident SROs and has recently added an elementary school Resource Officer liaison component which has created an officer friendly program geared toward providing a police presence in over 100 elementary schools. This is a component that parents, administrators, teachers, and elected officials have wanted for years.

The success of this, or any program is deeply rooted in the recruitment, selection, and training of officers who share a deep commitment and desire to engage and work with students, and possess the ability to collaborate with school administrators, educators, and parents to positively impact the entire school community.

The presence of school resource officers in our schools is an important component of the duty to protect children on campus. With law enforcement knowledge and skill combined with special SRO training these officers are an integral component of the design, development, and implementation of school safety plans.

SRO training focuses on the special nature of school campuses, student needs and characteristics, and the educational and custodial interests of school personnel. As a result, SROs possess a skill set unique among both law enforcement and educational personnel that enables them to protect the community and the campus while supporting the educational mission. In addition to traditional law enforcement tasks such as searching a student suspected of carrying a weapon or investigating whether drugs had been brought onto campus, SROs daily activities can include a wide range of supportive activities and programs depending on the type of school to which an SRO is assigned. Many of the SROs in Baltimore County also serve as coaches, club sponsors, and mentors beyond school hours. This humanizing of the police officer is especially important in today's world.

The SRO program in the Baltimore County Public Schools is not an optional add-on. It is a vital and functional component of the educational program for all our students. The BCPS SRO program has dedicated positions of leadership provided by the School System and the Police Department, which ensures regular professional development and supervision of our officers.

The CASE Board of Directors unanimously and vigorously voted to oppose this or any bill that would weaken the SRO program in the Baltimore County Public Schools. I thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns and I welcome any further inquiries from the Committee for clarification.

Most sincerely,

T. DeHart

Thomas DeHart
Executive Director

cc: Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

MCPA-MSA_SB 245-SRO-Oppose.pdf

Uploaded by: Mansfield, Andrea

Position: UNF



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair and
Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

FROM: Chief David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: January 27, 2021

RE: **SB 245 Public Schools – School Resource Officers – Requirements and Prohibitions**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **OPPOSE SB 245**. This bill places unreasonable, arbitrary, draconian, and unwarranted restrictions on a school resource officer (SRO)'s role and appearance during the course of an SRO's duties.

A school resource officer is a law enforcement officer who works closely with administrators in a school setting to create a safer environment for students and staff. In this role, the SRO also provides mentoring and conducts presentations on youth related issues. Because of this broader role in a school system, an SRO participates in a specialized training program designed specifically for working with students in a school setting. This training curriculum includes Maryland school law, trauma-informed counseling, restorative practices, relationship building, and peer mediation techniques. To employ the skills taught through this training an SRO must work in the school system, engage with students, build positive relationships, and direct students to resources. None of which will occur under SB 245.

SB 245 prohibits SROs from entering a school unless specifically summoned by an administrator, to participate in specialized instruction, or to use the bathroom. Further the SRO must wear civilian clothing and conceal firearms. These requirements not only harm the positive relationships students have with SROs across the state, they jeopardize the safety of the officer, students, staff, and school visitors. In 2018 after school shootings at Stoneman Douglas in Florida, and closer to home at Great Mills High School in St Mary's County during which a well-trained School Resource Officer confronted the active shooter, the General Assembly passed Maryland's Safe to Learn Act. The legislation was further enhanced in 2019. SB 245 is contrary to the positive actions this body has taken to promote school safety in reaction to very real threats to school safety. For many students, an SRO is a positive role model in which they trust and confide. These strong relationships build community trust and understanding and improve safety in the school environment.

Maryland law enforcement has many outstanding SROs among its ranks, including one who was recently named National School Resource Officer of the Year. MCPA and MSA urges the Committee not to take steps that would harm the great work of these officers.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA OPPOSE SB 245 and urge an UNFAVORABLE report.

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SB 245.SROs exluded from buildings.pdf

Uploaded by: Woolums, John

Position: UNF

BILL: Senate Bill 245
TITLE: Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Prohibited Conduct
DATE: January 27, 2021
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 245, due to the severe restrictions on the ability of school resource officers (SROs) to fulfill their professional role in providing critically important school security related services.

By excluding SROs from school buildings until called by administrators to respond to emergency situations, MABE is concerned about the unintended negative consequences of limiting the daily involvement and relationship building among SROs, students, and staff. This separation would eliminate the contributions of the SRO to school safety; contributions made possible by virtue of their professional training in de-escalation, restorative practices, and their being an integral team member with teachers and school administrators. Another objection is that limiting the SRO to an emergency response role could be expected to lead to SROs who are less well-informed about students and school climate and therefore likely respond in manners less in accord with the school's discipline policies.

MABE recognizes the major contributions SROs are making in schools across the state to benefit school climate, culture, and safety. Therefore, MABE respectfully disagrees with any proposal to unduly restrict the role of SROs. Today, SROs and teachers, principals, and other school personnel are collaborating to provide mentoring, counseling, and instruction concerning appropriate student behaviors, and are responding accordingly to violations of school policy and law. MABE also recognizes the need to pursue expanded training of SROs, principals, behavioral health staff, and teachers on the optimal classroom and school-based practices to maintain safe and supportive schools conducive to learning.

In the 2021 session, MABE is supporting legislation (House Bill 522) to prohibit SROs from unilaterally enforcing discipline-related school policies, rules, regulations, or procedures to ensure that SROs do not make determinations regarding student discipline. This legislation is aligned with Maryland's training program for SROs and therefore the policies and procedures that should already in place regarding the appropriate role of SROs as it relates to students, educators, and administrators, and student disciplinary actions.

The General Assembly is to be commended for the clear direction of the Safe to Learn Act of 2018 to develop a comprehensive curriculum for all SROs and any other designated school security personnel. The multi-faceted role of SRO's is evident in the outline of the 40-hour, 5-day, mandatory curriculum for all SROs and school security staff.

- School Resource Officer: Definition & History of Role
- Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding (MOU) between the police department and the school
- Working Collaboratively with School Administration and Staff
- Restorative Practices in Schools: PBIS, School Based Mediation, and School to Prison Pipeline considerations and Implicit Bias
- Maintaining a Positive School Climate
- Victimization of Youth in Schools - Child Protective Services

- Informal Counseling Roles and Responsibilities
- Disability & Diversity Awareness with a focus on Inclusiveness and Cultural Fluency
- Implicit Bias
- Drug Education and Current Trends in Maryland Schools
- Investigation of Bullying, Threats & Social Media
- Principles of Effective Learning - The Expanding Role of an SRO as an Instructor
- Constructive Interactions with Students - Building Trust and Reducing Fear
- Collaboration and Problem Solving with Stakeholders
- Youth Development, Behavior and Discipline

MABE firmly believes that safety in public schools is the joint responsibility of local boards of education, school administrators and staff, students, parents and guardians, law enforcement and other public safety agencies, human services agencies, and the community in general. Therefore, we continue to urge federal, state, and local governments to ensure adequate and equitable funding for local public school safety and security programs, alternative education programs, and the wide array of behavioral health and public safety services provided by other public and private entities. MABE believes that this holistic approach is essential to maintaining safe schools and access to a high quality education for all of Maryland's students.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 245.

SB 245--SROs--Requirements and Prohibitions--INFO-

Uploaded by: Dove, Tina

Position: INFO

**Informational Testimony regarding Senate Bill 245
Public Schools—School Resource Officers—Requirements and Prohibitions**

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

January 27, 2021

11:00 am

**Tina N. Dove, M.Ed.
Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on Senate Bill 245, legislation that would prohibit a school resource officer (SRO) from entering a school building except if summoned by a school administrator or official to respond to an emergency involving violence or the threat of violence; participating in a specialized instructional activity sanctioned by a school administrator or official; or using the school's restroom facilities. Additionally, it would require a SRO to conceal their service weapon unless they are responding to an emergency situation involving violence or a threat of violence. Finally, it would require SROs to wear civilian clothing and would prohibit them from being involved in situations related to routine student discipline.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. 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).

In 2017, the Maryland General Assembly passed House Bill 1287, which established the Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices. They were charged with studying the disciplinary practices being utilized in Maryland public schools and recommending best practices, particularly related to restorative approaches to student behavior and healthy school climates. In their final

report¹, they discuss the issue of SROs and the role they play in either helping or harming school climates and the role they must play in order to ensure restorative approaches are being properly implemented in schools.

SROs can serve as mentors for students, assist with health and law-related education (e.g., drug, alcohol, and gang prevention), coach sports teams, and respond in the event of a rare emergency. But in too many schools, SROs inappropriately have become heavy-handed enforcers of basic school discipline, causing arrests of children for minor incidents that should be handled by a teacher or principal.... Given the disparities in the implementation of discipline and school-based arrests at the school level, many Commission members are concerned that the Maryland Safe to Learn Act, Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 7-1508, which requires local school systems to identify either an assigned SRO or other law enforcement coverage for each school, may exacerbate these disparities. Increasing the presence of law enforcement in schools, without proper training and coordination with school personnel about the limits of their roles, could harm school climate, over criminalize adolescent behavior, and fuel the school-to-prison pipeline. To the extent a school has an SRO, that officer must have explicit guidelines about his/her responsibilities, with the role clearly limited to keeping school property and the people in the school safe from serious criminal activity. These parameters must be understood by administrators and other school staff. SROs never should be involved in student discipline or behavioral control of schoolchildren. (Page 26)

MSEA believes that the overall aim of this legislation is to provide clarity of mission for any SRO or school security employee so as to ensure that students feel safe; staff are clear on who is primarily responsible for handling routine school discipline matters; and that a healthy, safe, and supportive teaching and learning environment be achieved and maintained for all members of the school community. To be clear, educators have grave concerns about the conduct they are seeing and experiencing

¹<https://www.law.umaryland.edu/media/SOL/pdfs/Programs/ADR/STPP%20%20RP%20Commission%20Final%20Report.pdf> (Accessed on January 24, 2021)

in many of their schools—conduct that can involve violent and unruly behavior between students and toward adults. Effectively dealing with these types of behaviors is the responsibility of every member of the school community. But while there is no doubt that everyone has a role and a stake in creating a safe, healthy, and supportive teaching and learning environment, deliberate steps must be taken to ensure that routine discipline incidences do not unnecessarily become extreme altercations involving security personnel and students. These are the conditions that further exasperate and perpetuate the very school-to-prison pipeline the Commission sought to eliminate.

That said, we have concerns related to the specific requirements of this legislation. We worry that the overarching goal is a worthy one but that some of the specifics could prove challenging at the point of implementation. Furthermore, we believe that providing clarity around the roles and responsibilities of SROs and other school security personnel is merely one cog within the complicated system required to establish and maintain healthy, safe, and supportive teaching and learning environments for our students and for the educators charged with their care.

If we are to truly make manifest the fundamental systemic changes necessary to truly replace disruptive and unsafe learning and teaching environments with healthy school climates and communities, we must intentionally and simultaneously address the issues of student and educator trauma and mental and behavioral health; inadequate instructional and support staff; historically under-resourced schools and communities; desperately needed academic and non-academic supports for students and families; rigorous and relevant educator preparation and ongoing, job-embedded professional development; culturally responsive pedagogy, instructional practices, and instructional content; restorative accountability and behavior management practices that prioritize mitigating harm and restoring safe and healthy environments instead of punitive, ineffective, and deleterious discipline policies; and policy and regulatory solutions focused on meeting the needs of the whole child—ones that understand the unequivocal need to address Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs before we can hope to achieve success along the taxonomy for teaching, learning, and assessment (more commonly known as Bloom's Taxonomy).

SB 245 - MCSS LOI - Public Schools - School Resour

Uploaded by: Hands, Zachary

Position: INFO

Letter of Information

Senate Bill 245: Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Requirements and Prohibitions

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Kate Hession
Executive Director
kate.hession1@maryland.gov

January 27, 2021

On behalf of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), which strives to promote and enhance school communities that are inclusive educational environments free from fear, harm, trauma, and unnecessary hardship, thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of information regarding Senate Bill 245.

Senate Bill 245 would amend The Safe to Learn Act of 2018 (STLA) in three significant ways. First, it would prohibit School Resource Officers (SROs) from regularly entering school buildings unless they need to use the bathroom and only permits entry in other circumstances when an SRO is summoned by a school administrator or official. Second, it would prohibit SROs from openly carrying their service weapon except in limited circumstances. Third, it would prohibit SROs from wearing law enforcement uniforms.

The STLA defines an SRO as a law enforcement officer (§3-101(e)) who has been assigned to a school in accordance with a required Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the chief of a law enforcement agency (§3-101(b)) and the local education agency. The definition of SRO also encompasses Baltimore City school police officers (§4-318). Memorandums of Understanding set a positive tone for school-law enforcement partnerships and establish the goals of particular SRO programs. MOUs should be reviewed annually, and, at a minimum, should establish roles and responsibilities for school administrators and staff and the SROs assigned to serve the school community in a way which clearly delineates the differences in their respective roles while acknowledging common goals for maintaining a positive school environment.

Law enforcement professionals selected to become SROs in Maryland benefit from holistic education and training specific to the unique, important, and varied roles that SROs fulfill in Maryland's twenty-four diverse local school systems. Maryland's five-day SRO training curriculum, which is administered by MCSS, prepares an SRO to fulfill four distinct roles within a school community: the Role of Educator, the Role of Emergency Manager, the Role of Informal Counselor, and the Role of Law Enforcement. Topics required by law to be covered in the MCSS training curriculum include De-escalation, Disability Awareness, Maintaining a Positive School Climate, Constructive Interactions with Students, Implicit Bias, and Disability and Diversity Awareness with specific attention to Racial and Ethnic Disparities.



MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

While the STLA mandates that SROs complete the mandatory curriculum, the Act does not require officers who fulfill the role of “adequate law enforcement coverage” and other patrol officers, who may be contacted for service by a school, to be trained in the curriculum. This specialized training for working with youth within the school setting provides SROs with a unique understanding of how to fulfill the four roles of their job while serving and supporting Maryland’s students. It is critical to the performance of their duties, as they have trained under the STLA, that officers assigned to serve as SROs have the opportunity for meaningful engagement and relationship building with the students and staff they serve. Senate Bill 245 essentially reduces SROs to the functions of an emergency manager or patrol officer and strips away the ability for officers to engage in the other functions critical to service as an SRO.

The STLA mandates either the assignment of an SRO or adequate law enforcement coverage for each individual school within each of Maryland’s twenty-four local school systems. Local school systems, working in concert with local law enforcement agencies, determine how they will fulfill this mandate based on factors ranging from specific school climate and proximity to the closest first responders to student population size and other resources available.

Recognizing the uniqueness of each school system and each school within a school system, the STLA contains built-in flexibility to allow local school systems, in consultation with local law enforcement agencies, to determine whether SROs or adequate law enforcement coverage would best align with their needs and resources. Local school systems need not have a one-size fits all approach to every school within its system. As the STLA allows for variability based on local needs and resources, MCSS does not recommend changes in the law that would take away the ability for local authorities to determine how to position an SRO (or adequate law enforcement coverage) inside or outside of school buildings.

MCSS provided the standardized training curriculum for SROs and school security employees established in the STLA for the first time over several months leading up to the start of the 2019-2020 academic year. Although in-person training has been curtailed due to the pandemic, MCSS continues to train SROs and school security employees virtually and has offered multiple training sessions of “Understanding the Role of the SRO” for school administrators and staff. MCSS continues to add interdisciplinary training courses to fit the needs of local school systems and the SROs who currently serve them, along with other school professionals.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate Senate Bill 245. For additional information, please contact me at kate.hession1@maryland.gov.

