

Thank you for allowing me to speak with you today. My name is Dr. Christopher Schorr and I live in Damascus, Maryland.

I am here to speak with you about House Bill 1089, the “Police-free School Act” which would eliminate school resource officers and replace them with councilors – people who would not be armed and who would lack the training necessary to respond to emergency situations like the one I experienced as a high school student in San Diego, California.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001, Jason Hoffman brought a shotgun and a pistol to Granite Hills Highschool. Hoffman fired his shotgun at his vice principal and then indiscriminately into the quad, wounding three students and two teachers.

At the time of the shooting, my mother and my sister were in a nearby classroom. Together, half of my family (along with the rest of their class) hid under their desks while their classroom's windows were pelted with buckshot.

Hoffman failed to kill anyone that day; indeed, he never had the opportunity to access his second weapon after expending his shotgun ammo. This is because he was stopped – he was shot – by our school resource officer.

Only three weeks earlier, a shooting at Santana Highschool – another school in our district – had left two students dead and 13 injured. Santana did not have a school resource officer. Consequently, the student (Andy Williams) was able to reload his revolver three times before he was stopped.

As strange as it sounds, Santana was still lucky. That day, an off-duty police officer just happened to be on campus, registering his daughter. Santana lacked the dedicated police presence it needed and the gruesome price for this error was paid by two innocent children; however, the outcome would have been worse if Williams had *even more* time to murder *even more* children before the police department was able to dispatch officers to the school.

Years later, I briefly worked as a campus supervisor at another school in the same district. In this role, I witnessed the contributions made by our school resource officer Joe Crawford to school safety.

On several occasions where I was present, Joe was able to respond to crises in ways that I and other campus supervisors could not. In one instance, we had learned that a student had brought a firearm to school. Joe immediately removed the student from the classroom, searched him for weapons, and detained him.

Without a school resource officer present, the school would have had to rely on unarmed and unbody armored campus supervisors to remove a dangerous student from a classroom. Alternatively, it could have risked the lives of its students and faculty by simply calling the police and waiting.

Recall that Andy Williams was able to reload his firearm three times and kill two kids before he was stopped.

On another occasion, we were notified that a staff-member's mentally disturbed ex-husband had threatened her life. We (the campus supervisors) fanned out to observe the entrances to the

school; however, had this person arrived on campus *armed*, our only option would have been to radio for our campus SRO.

Again, the school could (and did) call the police department for back-up; but, having Joe there increased our resilience tremendously. I believe that having a uniformed police officer (and police vehicle) visibly present may have deterred the shooter that day.

San Diego schools aren't unique. School shootings can happen anywhere and school resource officers are our best line of defense against them.

I ask that you help to protect the lives of Maryland students, faculty, and staff by voting no on the Police-free School Act.