

**Testimony in Support of
HB 416 - Public Schools -
Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

TO: Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair and Members of the Ways and Means 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 **HB 416 - 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