

Testimony on Senate Bill 454 – Oppose

**SB 454 – Public Schools – School Resource Officers – Fire Arms Required
Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee**

February 11, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee

Presbyterians for Police Transformation strongly opposes **SB 454 – Public Schools – School Resource Officers – Firearms Required** and urge you to not advance the bill.

We, the Presbyterians for Police Transformation (PfPT), a ministry of Takoma Park Presbyterian Church (TPPC), are people of faith and followers of the Jesus who modeled and taught nonviolence. We write to urge you to make our public schools safer by voting against this bill.

Since our inception we have opposed the use of School Resource Officers (SROs) in any form. Overall, research shows that school officer programs do little or nothing to prevent shootings or gun-related incidents and have disproportional harmful effects on Black students and students with disabilities. Having the option of using lethal force that requiring officer to carry firearms creates serves to escalate rather than deescalate a potential volatile situation.

Jesus rebuked his disciple who cut off the ear of the person arresting him saying, "Put your sword back where it belongs. Those who live by the sword die by the sword."

Requiring SROs to carry guns will NOT prevent or reduce harm. In fact, it does the opposite, escalating the situation by increasing the possibility of a student being seriously injured or killed by an officer. Think of the trauma this imposes to--- the student, their family, the school community, AND -- the police officer, their family and fellow police officers.

Where SROs exist, instead of guns, equip them with a comprehensive toolbox of deescalation tactics that they have practiced until they are second nature. Better yet require schools to have sufficient Restorative Justice coordinators, social workers and peer counselors instead of SROs.

Again, we urge you to vote against SB 454.

Ruth Noel for Presbyterians for Police Transformation