

June 14th, 2022

Representative Marvin L. Abney
Chairman, House Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF H-8310 RELATING TO PLACING TWO SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS IN EVERY RI PUBLIC SCHOOL

Dear Chairman Abney,

My name is Chanravy Proeung and I am a resident of Cranston, Rhode Island. I am a Registered Nurse, co-founder of SISTA Fire, long time advocate for children and basic human rights. Most importantly, I am a mother writing to you today to **oppose** the new bill (H-8310) relating to placing two school resource officers in every public school in our state. As a parent, I understand the fears that parents often have with sending our children to school after watching a series of mass shootings happening throughout the country, but this is not the answer. Nor is it a long-term solution.

We cannot be rash and rooted in fear when finding solutions to create safe, positive, and healthy environments for our children in public schools. Police presence often does not transcribe a positive climate in a school setting, especially for students of color.

We already know that in cities like Providence, Rhode Island –

- 92% of arrests in Providence Public Schools were students of color;
- Black students disproportionately represent 30% of all student arrest, when Black students only make up 16% of the student body population in Providence Public Schools;
- When looking at race and gender, about 64% of all students arrests were males of color;
- Hispanic males make up 36% of total Providence Public School enrollment and are 44% of the students arrested in the student body population;

Nationally, we know that police presence codify the school to prison pipeline. Students of color disproportionately experience policing and harm. **Statistics have shown –**

- Black girls are 3.7 times more likely than white girls to be arrested and referred to law enforcement;
- Black boys are more than two times more likely to be arrested or referred to law enforcement than white boys;

This solution is rooted in a reactionary approach that is clearly more punitive than it is restorative. Our approaches need to move towards a pathway of harm reduction and violence

reduction. This is actually moving towards punitive based culture in our schools, which again, does not transcribe to creating a safe, positive, and healthy environment for our children in public schools. **We should be utilizing these funds for hiring health and safety staff that are rooted in prevention, alternative conflict resolution, behavioral interventionist, counselors, nurses, and mental health providers.**

In Community,

Chanravy Proeung, RN, BSN

Pronouns: (*she/her/hers*)

Co-Founder | [SISTA Fire](#)

Email: chanravy.proeung@gmail.com