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To: House Finance Committee
Subject: Student Email Testimony to Support HB8310

Name: David Montenegro
Bill: HB8310
Position: Support

Hello,

My name is David Montenegro and I went through the Providence Public School education system from Pre-K to 12th grade. I am Latino and grew up in Silver Lake. Having attended Pleasant View, Laurel Hill Annex, Alfred/Leviton Lima, Nathaniel Greene MS, and Classical HS, I can say from experience that our students can benefit from having officers in our public schools. I'm writing a short testimony for why I believe so.

I recall a number of situations where I felt unsafe as a result of student behaviors and the general environment in which some of these schools were. Sometimes I was concerned about my own safety that I couldn't concentrate in school, more distracted and worried about the behavior of others and how they can target me. I respect police officers and the work they do, and I feel more safe in a place where I can be sure that if there is a fight, or dangerous situation, the officers can help protect the innocent students. Students will be far less worried about disruptive and dangerous situations in class, and students will have the space in mind to focus on their education.

I graduated 2 years ago from Classical, and I disagree with the pushback against police officers. Officers are there to help and protect the students from the outside world and from each other. Students who are respectful, responsible, and are eager to learn in school would not be the first people to be concerned of having police officers.

Now I attend Babson College, and my campus has their own police officers. Our student body has a great relationship with them and we feel very secured and supportive. I don't see why we can't have something similar in our public schools.

I will offer one counter argument regarding that police officers don't prevent school shootings. Potential shootings are stopped all the time. Just today, an armed man who was about to enter a youth summer camp was shot by the police. Many of these stories go under the radar because those are minor incidents. If the officers were not there, these would have turned into mass shootings.

Once again, I urge the committee to pass HB8310. Thank you.

Best,
David Montenegro