

Steven Sepe

From: Acevedo, Joseph <joseph_acevedo@brown.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, June 14, 2022 7:00 AM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: H8310 - Written Testimony - Opposed

Hello,

My name is Joseph Acevedo and I am writing in opposition to House Bill 8310. I am a recent graduate of Brown University's Urban Education Policy program during which I interned for a school district in Rhode Island and studied education systems in Rhode Island and the broader United States.

While school safety is an agreeable priority in education, placing more school resource officers (SROs) in schools is not a proper solution. In Uvalde, the local school district employed its own police officers and about 40% of Uvalde's budget was allocated to its police force yet this did not prevent a tragic shooting from occurring in the city. Similarly, in Parkland, Florida during 2018, an armed SRO failed to confront a shooter who eventually killed 17 people at MSD High School. There is little reason to believe that SROs would protect students any better in Rhode Island, especially since research has repeatedly shown that SROs worsen student safety and educational outcomes through punitive policing. One recent study by Brown University found that employing SROs did not reduce gun violence on school campuses but increased student suspensions, expulsions, and arrests.

The money which H8310 would allocate for SROs to reactively respond to crime should instead be spent on improving school climates to proactively promote safer schools and cities.

Source: Sorensen, Lucy C., Montserrat Avila Acosta, John Engberg, and Shawn D. Bushway. (2021). The Thin Blue Line in Schools: New Evidence on School-Based Policing Across the U.S.. (EdWorkingPaper: 21-476). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: <https://doi.org/10.26300/heqx-rc69>

Sincerely,
Joseph Acevedo