



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Mark Desetti, testimony
House Appropriations Committee
March 16, 2018
HB 2773, School Safety and Security Act

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2773.

It is important that we have rigorous standards for the security of school buildings and that our schools and school districts have detailed security plans to ensure the safety of our students and staff. We applaud those sections of the bill.

We have a concern with the \$5 million provided for security grants. These grants are intended to help schools make buildings more secure, but the bill recognizes that the funding is likely to be inadequate. That is the intent behind establishing the appeals process. We believe that once school districts have reviewed the status of all buildings in the district - with the assistance of law enforcement professionals - then it is incumbent upon the state to fund all necessary security improvements. Many of our school buildings were constructed long before the proliferation of the assault weapons with high capacity magazines which are the preferred weapons of mass murderers. Securing all those buildings should not be subject to artificial funding limits.

We do believe that every building must be made secure for the safety of our students. These shootings are not restricted to any particular area of the state or country. They have happened in wealthy areas and low-income areas, in urban areas, suburban areas, and rural areas. No one can predict where the next event will be and so it is incumbent upon us to secure every building in every community.

While this bill is well-intentioned, we believe it falls short in adequately addressing the issues in our society that have led to repeated mass shootings not only in our schools but everywhere from supermarket parking lots to theaters to outdoor concerts and even on military facilities.

We also believe that the legislature must go beyond simply trying to secure our buildings. The legislature must consider the impact of all gun laws in Kansas. Have you considered the age for gun purchases? Have you considered universal background checks for all gun purchases whether from a business or at a gun show? Have you considered the impact of ending the requiring of a permit and undergoing training to carry a firearm?

While there appears to be some effort to address such concerns, just recently an amendment to a gun bill would allow free access to some silencers allowing someone with a handgun and an intent to kill to wander a building shooting without most people in the building hearing the attack.

We hope you might look inside yourself, look in the eyes of a child, and ask, "Have we gone too far?" We saw this week that the youth of this state and this nation think perhaps you have.

By all means, pass this legislation. But please do not think that this bill adequately addresses the issue of mass murder in this state or nation.