

Bill inspired by Chardon High School shooting

The Ohio House Education and Career Readiness Committee recently heard testimony in support of H.B. 318, which would establish training requirements for school resource officers (SRO).

Tim Armelli, Chardon High School teacher and coach, and Frank Hall, former coach – both of whom were present during Ohio’s deadliest school shooting in 2012 – offered testimony in support of the legislation.

“Throughout Ohio there currently exist confusion and inconsistency in the term and training of school resource officers,” Armelli said. “Local school officials can use the term ‘school resource officer’ as they see fit. They can determine what training, if any, a school resource officer needs. We need to set a standard by which the people in our buildings, with the task of protecting our children’s lives, are held to a high standard of moral, ethical and legal responsibility.”



The legislation would require all new school resource officers to complete a peace officer training program approved by the Ohio Peace Officers Training Commission. Additionally, they would be required to complete at least 40 hours of school resource officer training through either the National or Ohio Association for School Resource Officers or another certified training program that includes instruction regarding skills, tactics and strategies to address the specific nature of various potentially dangerous situations.

The bill would allow school resource officers to provide services related to districts’ or schools’ comprehensive emergency management plans, and would permit them to make arrests, conduct searches and seizures, carry a firearm, and exercise other police powers in accordance with the standards and requirements applicable to all Ohio peace officers.

Chardon Mayor Nancy McArthur, who also testified in support of the legislation, told committee members: “The results of having an SRO are not necessarily something that can be measured, graphed, or documented. But those of us in Chardon know that having an SRO in our public schools contributes to our students’ physical safety, their mental health, and to their growth as contributing members of our society.”

Existing school resource officers – generally individuals employed as police officers of municipal corporations, townships or other political subdivisions – would be “grandfathered” under the bill and exempt from the training requirements.