

Jennifer Lima
H8102
Support

I am writing in support of Representative Boylan's bill H8102 which makes revisions to the number, timing, and procedures to be followed when schools grades K through 12 implement fire drills, evacuation drills, and crisis response drills, designed to protect the health and safety of students. I am writing as a mother, and a member of the North Kingstown School Committee but the views I express are my own and do not represent those of the committee.

I have followed with great interest the work that the Commission on Safety Protocols for Schools has done. I greatly appreciate the time and diligence the commission members and experts they consulted have devoted to this very important subject.

North Kingstown experienced two swatting incidents during the 2022-2023 school year. During the first one, my son, who was a senior in high school at the time, texted me to ask me what was happening. Not having any information about the hoax calls going on around the state I had no answer for him other than the truth - that I didn't know but the text said there was no immediate danger. And then had to hope that was true.

Later that day I saw and heard from multiple people who teach in multiple districts about the trauma from the day - and then the compounded trauma of having to resume teaching following the all clear like nothing had happened. When it happened again, I think more people knew it was a swatting incident. But you still have to prepare and react as if it's not.

Children are growing up traumatized by the fact that this can happen in their school. And they are also growing up traumatized by the drills that have to be conducted as a result of that reality. As a mother I worry about my own children's safety, but as a school committee member I worry about the safety of every child in our district - as well as the teachers, the staff, and every single person that comes in and out of the building on a daily basis. Their physical safety, and their mental wellbeing are at the top of my mind every single day.

This bill seeks to ensure we are not causing additional harm to our students and our staff in our attempts to keep them safe and I hope you will vote yes. Thank you for your time and for your consideration of this important piece of legislation.

Jennifer Lima
4 Hickory Drive East
North Kingstown, RI