



## RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION

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April 2, 2024

The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara  
Chairman, House Education Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

### **RE: House Bill No. 8102 RELATING TO EDUCATION – School Emergency Drill Act**

Dear Chairman McNamara:

I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association (RIPCA) to voice our support for the House bill referenced above which directs school districts to conduct fire, evacuation and crisis response drills. We believe that this legislation is a critical step towards ensuring the safety and well-being of our students and staff in schools across the state.

The tragic events that have unfolded in schools in recent years serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need for comprehensive emergency preparedness measures. By requiring crisis response drills, the School Emergency Drills Act would equip schools with the necessary tools and protocols to effectively respond to various emergencies, including fires, acts of violence, and other unforeseen incidents.

Of particular importance, this training shall be held in conjunction of local first responders, include lockdown procedures as well as an evacuation option, include all staff as participants, seek input from the Rhode Island school safety committee and utilize trauma informed-practices. Recognizing that emergencies can have profound and lasting effects on the mental and emotional well-being of students and staff, it is imperative that our response efforts are grounded in empathy, understanding, and support. By integrating trauma-informed practices into emergency drills and response protocols, we can ensure that the needs of all individuals impacted by emergencies are addressed with care and sensitivity.

As an association that deeply values the safety and security of our school communities, I commend the efforts of the bill's sponsors and others involved in drafting this bill. I urge you to support the School Emergency Drills Act and to work towards its swift passage into law. Together, we can take proactive steps to protect our students, support our educators, and build safer, more resilient schools for generations to come.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony on behalf of the RIPCA and as always, I am available for any follow-up questions you or the committee may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

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President,  
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