

Act Number:	09-131	
Bill Number:	760	
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

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md
SENATE

225 001426
April 22, 2009

Calendar 81, Senate Bill 760, I move be placed on the
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on consent. Seeing no objection, so
ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Also calendar page 39,
Calendar 83, Senate Bill 762, I move to place that
item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on consent. Seeing no objection, so
ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

And finally, Mr. President, also on calendar page
39, Calendar 99, Senate Bill 787, I move to place that
item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on consent. Seeing no objection, so
ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. And one item moving
the other direction, calendar page 42, Calendar 155,
Senate Bill 451, that had been marked go, would change
the marking on that to PR.

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Agenda Number 3, Emergency Certified Bill 6716 and
House Bill -- correction, 6379.

Turning to the calendar, calendar page 2,
Calendar Number 475, Senate Resolution Number 19;
Calendar 476, Senate Resolution Number 20; Calendar
477, Senate Joint Resolution Number 74.

Calendar page 4, Calendar Number 139, Senate Bill
854.

Calendar page 6, Calendar 178, Senate Bill 873.

Calendar page 7, Calendar 194, Substitute for
Senate Bill 756.

Calendar page 8, Calendar 223, Substitute for
Senate Bill 46.

Calendar page 10, Calendar Number 240, House Bill
Number 6401.

Calendar page 12, Calendar Number 264, Substitute
for Senate Bill 1023.

Calendar page 14, Calendar 328, Substitute for
Senate Bill 814.

Calendar page 19, Calendar Number 400, House Bill
6351.

Calendar page 20, Calendar Number 402, Substitute
for House Bill 6193.

Calendar page 21, Calendar 408, House Bill 6322;

Calendar 409, Senate Bill 1013.

Calendar page 23, Calendar 423, Substitute for
Senate Bill 1010.

Calendar page 27, Calendar 443, Substitute Senate
Bill 1149; Calendar 447, Senate Bill 673; Calendar
448, Senate Bill 1029.

Calendar page 30, Calendar 459, House Bill 5138;
Calendar 461, House Bill 6406; Calendar 462,
Substitute for House Bill 6537.

Calendar page 39, Calendar Number 81, Substitute
for Senate Bill 760; Calendar 83, Senate Bill 762;
Calendar 99, Senate Bill 787.

Calendar page 40, Calendar 119, Substitute for
Senate Bill 778.

Calendar page 43, Calendar 171, Senate Bill 251.

Calendar page 46, Calendar Number 266, Senate
Bill Number 382.

Calendar page 51, Calendar Number 356.

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Mr. President, I believe that completes those
items previously placed on the first Consent Calendar.

The Senate is now voting by roll call on the
Consent Calendar, will all Senators please return to
the chamber. The Senate is now voting by roll call on
the Consent Calendar, will all Senators please return

to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

The machine is open.

Members, please check the board to see if your vote is properly cast and properly recorded. If all members have voted, the machine will be locked.

Would the Clerk please take a tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on adoption of Consent Calendar Number 1. Total number voting, 35; those voting yea, 35; those voting nay, 0; those absent/not voting, 1.

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar 1 is passed.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, the two items that appeared on Senate Agenda Number 3, have just been passed on the Consent Calendar. I would move that the first item from Senate Agenda Number 3, House Bill 6716, the emergency certified bill, I move for immediate transmittal of that item to the Governor.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is for immediate transmittal to the

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Please proceed, Madam.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83rd):

Mr. Speaker, in the Well of the House I have two guests here today that are not family, but they are very important people, Stu and Ruth Birchstead, and I'd like the Chamber to join me in welcoming them to the Chamber.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause.)

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Nice to see a little bit of Meriden here this morning.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 538.

THE CLERK:

On Page 46, Calendar Number 538, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 760 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL CRISIS RESPONSE DRILLS AND FIRE DRILLS. Favorable Report of the Committee on Planning and Development.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The distinguished Vice-Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The question is on acceptance and passage. Will you explain the Bill please, sir.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under current law, schools are required to perform monthly fire drills. Also under current law the schools may substitute a crisis response drill for one of the fire drills every three months.

The current Bill that we're considering would require that the schools substitute the crisis response drill for the fire drill every third month.

It also would require that the first fire drill be performed within 30 days of the start of the school year. The school would have to develop a drill format in consultation with the local police. That's the drill format for the crisis response drill, and a representative from the local law enforcement agency may supervise and participate in the drill at its discretion.

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I think that the need for this is obvious. We've all seen on the news the tragic incidents that have occurred in other places in the country. Columbine and Virginia Tech immediately come to mind, I'm sure, and I think we would all agree that our school systems need to be prepared and organized and be trained for a response in the event one becomes necessary, and this Bill will go a long way toward ensuring that preparedness, and I would urge my colleagues to support it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, Sir. The distinguished Ranking Member of the Public Safety Committee, Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Mr. Speaker, good afternoon. Thank you very much. As Representative Jutila said, the need for schools to be able to respond to crises is in front of us every day. We see it on the news. We see and hear of very unfortunate situations and I support what we are doing in an attempt to educate our young people and prepare our young people and our teachers on how to respond in cases of crisis.

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I do have to ask a question, though, and it immediately comes to mind, and I would ask that question to the proponent, through you, Mr. Speaker, if I may.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

What is the cost that we expect might be a result of both the plans that need to be developed, and the actual implementation of the drills. People are very aware of mandates, unfunded mandates and if you could explain that a little bit, I think it might be beneficial.

Through you, sir. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila, do you care to respond?

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to Representative Perillo, it is not anticipated that there would be any additional cost.

Currently, as I indicated in my opening remarks, the school systems are required to conduct fire drills monthly. This would simply substitute crisis response

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drill in place of one of the fire drills every three months.

The school system in cooperation and coordination with the local police would have to develop a plan. It is anticipated that the plans would be developed with the available resources that they have. In other words, the superintendent and his staff, assistant superintendents, other staff members. Teachers may participate in the development of that plan within their daily work.

There is a potential cost if the local law enforcement agency chooses to participate, but again, that's discretionary. It is not mandatory.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the gentleman for his answer. I recall in Committee an earlier version of this Bill was not permissive. It was actually very specific and actually stated that a representative of such agency shall supervise and participate in any such crisis response drill and if I recall from our Committee's discussion, we changed that shall to a may in order to address some of the

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concerns about mandate, and I think that's an improvement.

Another question I would ask, though, do schools at the present time have plans in place and if not, is there any cost associated with that?

Obviously, the creation of a crisis response plan and a drill and a way to make it work is not necessarily something that superintendents and their staff have expertise in. Is there going to be a need for emergency responder involvement in that and could that lead to any sort of mandated cost? Through you, Sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, a number of schools currently have plans in place and in fact are conducting the crisis response drills in accordance with the current permissive statute, and I'm not aware of those school systems incurring any additional cost to do that, and they do it on their own.

They do it in coordination with local police departments and I'm not aware of any costs that they've incurred.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Mr. Speaker, thank you, and I thank the gentleman for his answer. The reason why I ask is because as I said previously, we had changed one shall to a may in order to address the cost effect of this, but we did not change both shalls to a may, and the Bill as worded, does say that, I just want to make sure I get it right, that boards shall develop the format of such crisis response drill in consultation with the appropriate local law enforcement agencies.

So there is still a requirement just you know, truth in advertising on this, there is still a requirement that local law enforcements get involved with the development of a crisis response drill and I just think it's important that people recognize that.

I thank the gentleman for his time and for his answers, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you, questions to the proponent of the Bill.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to Representative Jutila, it's my understanding that current law, which this Bill that's before us will repeal and substitute therefore, but current law says, each local and regional board of education shall provide for a fire drill to be held in the schools of such board at least once each month, except that once every three months, a crisis response drill may be substituted for a fire drill.

Is that your understanding of current law?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila,

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, that is my understanding of current law.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, the Bill that's before us amends that current law in a couple

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of ways. The first thing it says is, instead of at least once each month, it says not later than 30 days after the first day of each school year.

What would be the difference between having a fire drill within 30 days of the first day of each school year versus having it once a month? Wouldn't that really be saying the same thing? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, yes. The, Representative Cafero, it says almost the same thing, but I think that I could see a situation where a school year started say on August 25th.

Under current law, one might interpret that to mean they would have to have a fire drill within the next six days in order to comply with this law.

This way, it gives the schools a chance to get settled in and conduct a drill within 30 days so it could be conducted some time in September up to the 25th in my example.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Cafero.

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REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it potentially could eliminate one fire drill by calendar. Is that the way you read this? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, it certainly could, particularly in the example that I offered.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, in the hypothetical that you gave, Representative Jutila, would it prevent a school system who may start their school year on August 20th, let's say, from having a fire drill during that month of August even though it's a "partial month"?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, I do not believe anything in current law would prevent a

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school system from conducting additional fire drills
if it concluded that it wanted to do that.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, Section (b)
of the Bill, Subsection (b) of the Bill, oh, excuse
me, the Bill that's before us indicates that each
school board shall substitute a crisis response drill
for a fire drill at least once every three months.

The current law indicates that except that once
every three months a crisis response drill may be
substituted for a fire drill. Is there any difference
with regard to the requirement I read in the Bill
that's before us and current law? Through you, Mr.
Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the only difference is
that under current law the crisis response drill is
permissive.

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In other words, a school system could choose to conduct one every third month or continue with fire drills every 30 days and that's the difference.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe in answer to Representative Perillo's question, you indicated that a local law enforcement agency need not supervise or participate in a crisis response drill if they choose not to. Is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, through you, that is correct.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, is Representative Jutila aware of, I know you referenced some national tragedies of course with Columbine and some others,

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which quite frankly from my perspective, regardless of what response or crisis response was in place, there was no way to anticipate the horrific acts that took place at Columbine and some of the other places you mentioned.

But I guess my question through you, Mr. Speaker would be, is there anything that happened, God forbid, or almost happened in Connecticut that showed a real need for this Bill to be now, supplant what was current law because we felt that one of our school systems was ill prepared or was caught short during a crisis, et cetera.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of no particular incident, particularly nothing of the magnitude and the tragic nature of the examples cited at the beginning of my remarks.

But what I can tell you, and this was not the impetus for the Bill, but in the largest school district in my district, in the Town of East Lyme, I spoke with the assistant superintendent, Dr. Paul

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Freeman, and he, my question to him was, has the school district ever conducted any of the crisis response drills pursuant to the current statute that allows it, and his answer was yes.

We have conducted drills and in fact they've been very beneficial. There actually have been a couple of incidents in East Lyme, one that could potentially have had tragic consequences when we had a bank robbery nearby one of the schools and the bank robber was actually on the school grounds, and the school implemented its plan that it had practiced under the drills and the police of course were on scene, the helicopter was there, and tragedy was averted, perhaps partially as a result of the drills. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I gather from your comments, Representative Jutila and through you, Mr. Speaker, that there is nothing in our law that prevents school districts from having the kind of crisis planning drills as often as they like, as many times as they like in conjunction with emergency medical personnel or public safety personnel.

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In fact, I believe in the example you just cited, that actually took place with regard to the district that, of the superintendent you referred to.

Is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would answer the same way that I did with regard to the fire drills, that I know of nothing in current law that would prevent any school district from, first of all, the current statute would allow for the substitute of one crisis response drill every three months for the fire drill.

But if the schools chose to have even more than that, they could. But of course, you have to keep in mind that they're making a choice then to either conduct the crisis response drill or the fire drill, whether under current law or if this Bill passes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the gentleman for his answers. Ladies and gentlemen, is there anything wrong with this Bill? I guess not.

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Does it really change what current law is, or what every single town and board of education can already do? No.

Does it, is it in response to, God forbid, a crisis that we as the State of Connecticut faced in one of our school districts or in one of our schools that found ourselves ill prepared? No.

Sometimes at this late stage, you've got to wonder why we are doing such a Bill when it is already in law.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS: (150th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good afternoon. If I may through you please, a couple of questions to the proponent of the Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, is it in current law right now that all school districts and school classes must have a fire drill once a month, please?

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Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila, do you care to respond?

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is going to change, so that once every three months each school district can or shall conduct an emergency, a full emergency response drill.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, under this Bill it would be a requirement that the school district substitute one crisis response drill for a fire drill every three months.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

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Thank you for your response. I guess the reason why I ask is because having been a parent and now a grandparent and children in school, every one of these drills does create a certain amount of down time within the classroom. It takes a certain amount of time to get the classes organized, to get them out of the school.

And while I certainly think it is important that every school have a proper emergency response drill that they've actually practiced, to do this would be now three emergency response drills a year if I read this Bill correctly.

I think that creates a certain amount of confusion in the classroom to get the children out and get them back, and once again, I wonder if it isn't just a little bit of overkill.

I don't know, I think we should be doing one a semester to make sure that we bring in all the new students that have come into the school.

But have you checked with boards of education around the state, and do they think that this is a proper response at this time? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

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Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, there may be a misunderstanding on the current proposed legislation. It would add no additional drills. It would simply substitute a crisis response drill for a fire drill that's already required every three months.

And I, you know, in talking to the assistant superintendent in my district, in the largest district, school district in my Assembly District, it was clear to me that he believes strongly in the benefits of conducting this drill and you know, whatever little bit of, I think the word was confusion that might be created, is actually cleared up by conducting the drills and practicing the response and you know.

In testimony that we had before the Committee, one of the police chiefs, the president of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association noted the fact that 164 lives have been lost nationwide in school shootings and I think this is a pretty small price to pay for the possibility of preventing something like that from happening here in Connecticut in the future. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the gentleman for his answer. I certainly think that all of our schools should be prepared. I almost wonder if, I want to make sure that teachers have a cell phone and have some sort of an electronic response device within their classrooms.

I think there was a college three or four weeks ago where the students knew within a couple of minutes that there was a sniper on the campus because they all had cell phones and they all got text messages immediately, and I'm not sure how you would exactly implement that in our grade school, our elementary classrooms.

But I do think that's another follow through that we should do for an emergency response.

I thank the gentleman for his answers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, madam. Representative D'Amelio.

REP. D'AMELIO (71st):

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker, a question through you to the proponent of the Bill, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. D'AMELIO (71st):

Representative, I'm familiar with what fire drills are because when I attended school we had fire drills. These crisis response drills, how do they differ?

Is it a lock-down situation that the kids are placed in? Are they let out of the building? Can you explain, through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to Representative D'Amelio. Generally, probably the highest priority is practicing the lock-down because these are the situations that could be the, of greatest concern.

And evacuation is another possibility, depending upon the incident. I would prefer, I am aware of some of the details of how the drills are conducted in East

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Lyme where I passed some pretty extensive discussion with the school leadership there.

I would prefer not to publicly go into the details of that for security and safety reasons.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative D'Amelio.

REP. D'AMELIO (71st):

Are these drills constructed through the public safety departments of the municipality, along with the school department? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, it's not well, it's not required that the local law enforcement participate, but my assumption is, and I know that this is fact in the case of East Lyme, that both local police and fire departments participate in the planning and implementation of the drills, and my assumption is that that's what's occurring in many other school systems in the state.

REP. D'AMELIO (71st):

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One further question if I may, Mr. Speaker. So every school district can be different in how they conduct these drills? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes. We did not attempt in this legislation to provide every detail of what the plan should be or how the drill should be conducted, preferring to leave that to the local school district in consultation with the local emergency personnel.

And of course, our State Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security would of course be available to provide guidance to any school system that would be interested in having that.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative D'Amelio.

REP. D'AMELIO (71st):

I thank the gentleman for his answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

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Thank you, sir. Representative Genga.

Representative Hamzy.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to pose a couple of questions to the proponent.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the proponent. Was there testimony given at the public hearing that schools were not conducting these drills as suggested in the current state statute?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila, do you care to respond?

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, there was no testimony that I can recall one way or the other as to whether the schools were taking advantage of the current statute and conducting the drills or not, or how they might be conducting them. Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Hamzy.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, was there a survey conducted or some way to determine whether or not school districts were or were not conducting the drills in accordance with the current state statute?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no. I've asked that question to the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and they have indicated that there is no requirement that the school districts report to the Department, and so the Department has no detailed information although they are aware that certain school districts are conducting the drills.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Hamzy.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, how was the conclusion drawn that we needed to make a change in the current statute to mandate school boards conduct these drills on the basis as described in the proposed change?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

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REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I view it as an evolutionary process that, you know, began with the statute that allowed for substituting one drill every three months, which is an indication of the public policy as expressed by this Legislature that this is an important thing to do.

There's an awareness that some school districts are doing it. We also are fully aware of the tragic consequences in other schools throughout the country, and I think now the Legislature after three Committees looking at this and passing it overwhelmingly, the Senate passing it unanimously, I think recognizes that this would be good public policy to make sure that all school districts in the state are doing this. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Hamzy.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the proponent for his answers.

Mr. Speaker, obviously, conducting these types of drills is extremely important and I think everyone recognizes that.

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I think the current state statute as it's written where it gives local school boards the flexibility to implement these types of drills and to conduct them at their discretion, I think is sufficient.

I continue to be troubled by the sort of parent/child relationship that is developing between the State Legislature and local school boards.

And my opposition to this Bill is not rooted in the substance of it, but it's rooted in the fact that we have no idea whether or not school districts are currently conducting these types of drills or not.

For all we know, they may currently be doing this and the implementation of this statutory change will result in no meaningful difference in what is actually occurring at the local level.

I just feel at some point in time, there are going to be so many mandates that we place on local school boards that we may as well not even have them, because everything that they are required to do will be dictated by us to them.

And I think when you keep these changes or these mandates that we've proposed in the back of our minds, and give local school boards at least some discretion or some flexibility to implement what are certainly

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good ideas. Nobody, I think is questioning the merits of conducting these drills.

But I think we should be giving school boards the discretion, or the flexibility, to implement them as they deem fit.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this proposed change based on that, on those conclusions that were drawn that we have no idea whether or not this Bill is even warranted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Hetherington.

REP. HETHERINGTON (125th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose a question or two to the proponent, if I may.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed.

REP. HETHERINGTON (125th):

Thank you. Reading the description of the development of the format of the crisis response drill, it's clear that it is oriented toward a security threat in the sense of a threat that would require a police response.

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I wonder if there is an expectation that a crisis response drill would include public health threats, for example, responding to a pandemic, and if any consideration were given to that? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila, do you care to respond?

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to Representative Hetherington, again, we had tried to leave in the legislation the flexibility for the school district with local emergency response personnel to develop their own plans and address any perceived incident that might occur.

I suppose that a public health threat is a possibility. A pandemic, I'm not sure that that's what this particular legislation is geared toward, because I think in the case of a pandemic we tend to get a lot of warning, and it's not the kind of incident where you have an immediate need to secure students or remove students from a building.

But again, I would leave that to the local officials to determine.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

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Representative Hetherington.

REP. HETHERINGTON (125th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, what is the sanction if a school board does not, for whatever reason, through design or neglect, if a school board failed to set up a crisis response drill as required by the statute?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, there is no sanction to the local school boards or the local school districts. The Legislature in adopting this legislation would be assuming that as in all cases, that our local education officials would comply with the law. Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Hetherington.

REP. HETHERINGTON (125th):

I thank the Representative for his responses. Mr. Speaker, certainly as has been pointed out, there's very little default with the idea of having a crisis response drill.

But there are several things, I think, to keep in mind. One, when you formalize a requirement, when you write it into a statute, almost always events get ahead of the requirement.

We already talked about the possibility of a pandemic, or a health crisis that is not included in the response drill, may be, or may not be, but it's not required to be included.

A situation where suddenly a student is found to have swine flu or a form of meningitis that can be communicated and immediate action is required to deal with the student population convened on any particular day. So it is possible that you could have a health crisis that develops very rapidly and has to be dealt with immediately.

The point is that we put these things in law and the law is, the law is obsolete in part. Events get ahead of it, whereas if we don't put it in law, we leave it to local authorities to be prepared to deal with virtually whatever.

In addition, we tend to think often that if it's a good idea, let's make a law out of it. Well, I suppose one can say, well, what's wrong with that? If

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it's a good idea, why shouldn't we set it forth in statute?

Well, in addition to the fact that events get ahead of the statute, there is the matter of, there is some responsibility attached, some liability attached to failure to abide by a state mandate, even though there is no prescribed sanction against the school board or its members that fail to follow this directive.

One can imagine a situation where, and God we hope not, but a tragic security breach develops, someone is injured, the lawsuit follows. If the school board had only done what they were supposed to do, and have the drills, which they failed to do or the drills were not as fully developed as they might have been, then you're talking about liability for the school board and its members.

So every requirement creates a duty. Every breach of duty creates a potential for liability. We should keep that in mind because most school boards, all that I know of, are staffed by volunteers, people in the communities that go forth late into the night, like we do, to serve their local communities and try

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to operate their local schools in a way that is consistent with the best interests of their children.

So there are consequences to putting it in the law, and just because it sounds like a good idea, it's not necessarily harmless to put it in the law.

I plan to support this because I don't think there's any immediate threat apparent at this time that school boards will encounter some difficulty because of it.

But we are, what's troubling is that we are creating more and more of a complex system of regulations and rules to dictate what a school board might do on its own when it's most familiar with the needs of its children and its communities, and whose interests are beyond doubt, that it's not in the best interest of the children.

So I'm afraid that if we continue on this basis, we're not going to get the people to serve that we want to serve because why would any thoughtful, responsible citizen want to go into the thicket of state law and mandates and incur possible liability and at least public embarrassment for some inadvertent failure?

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I would much prefer leaving these things to what we originally intended to do, I suppose, and that is to leave it to the, leave it to the best judgment of local citizens, and on that though, Mr. Speaker, I'll thank you and sit down.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak up on this and I actually have responded to a couple dozen emergencies at some schools and colleges in the past 10 years, and I know more often than not, we've responded to false alarms.

But every once in a while a false alarm is actually something like a boiler fire. There have been a couple of fires inside the schools, and there is situations where it's extremely important for the students and the teachers in the classroom to know exactly what they should do during these fire drills.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, a question to the proponent of the Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed.

REP. COUTU (47th):

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I was curious for a crisis, I know we have some examples of Columbine, I guess those are relating to weapons. Are there any other things that fall under crises pertaining to the schools?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila, a question on crises.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to Representative Coutu, there could be other types of crises. A weather crisis comes to mind, something that's fast occurring without a lot of warning. For example a tornado could be another type of crisis that these response drills would be geared toward. Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, I was personally thinking there's other things that we responded to. Smoke, which is somewhat in line with a fire drill. There are kinds of chemicals and other things, you have a chemical leak, bleach or something. That could be a crisis.

And in this Bill as I was going through it, the first section I think it's good that you put in there

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the 30 days. That makes sense to me instead of having it within the month.

And in Section (b), there is a line that has once every three months. Through you, Mr. Speaker, do we know how many times a year that would be in a school year, would the breakdown be with crisis for say a fire drill?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I think it's pretty simple math. If the school year starts in September and ends in June, you could count the number of months and divide by three, and that would be how many crisis response drills.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

All right, so somewhere in the range of three potential crisis drills, five fire drills and below that, it actually has something in there that's addressing the shall develop a format, which I suppose is a plan. How extensive would that plan have to be? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, there are no guidelines in this legislation. The plan can be as extensive as the local school board in consultation with their emergency response personnel determine.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I assume that could be as simple as any crisis we will have a lock-down. Would that be sufficient? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, again, there are no guidelines, but in my view that would be not an example of a realistic crisis response drill, or crisis response plan.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the gentleman for his answer. I know in a city such as Norwich, where we have up to potentially 12 schools, if this format would be extremely complex and the burden was placed on the board of ed, that could be a challenge.

I know our fire department, our police departments already have different plans established whereas if there is a crisis, somebody on the premises with a weapon, an assault, chemical leak, gas leak, anything other than a fire or smoke in the building, the police, the emergency response agencies, departments, actually have plans in place to make sure that we arrive on the scene and take control.

What I would see most of the time if there is a situation with a crisis, an assault, primarily the two examples given in the testimony were Columbine and the Virginia Tech mass, I guess, shooting, which was just a horrible situation. Those are situations that are extremely rare.

The preparation, the only thing you can do in my view in a situation like that would be to have a lock-down and get the police and emergency responders as quick as possible.

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It doesn't mean that by any means I think there's anything wrong with having crisis training and making sure the students understand if there is an assault or something violent on the campus or on the school, that they should actually have a lock-down, and I know most students up to a certain grade, I know at least when I was a student, you basically listen to the instructor, the teacher, and they tell you, stay in your seat. Stay in the classroom. Get in the classroom, when they believe there is something going on.

My concern with this is just in my view, of the responses that I've responded to as a person and a local fire department, most of the responses were directly related to smoke, fire, something that requires the students to evacuate the building and meet at a central location, sort of making it in a situation where they may have to substitute up to almost 50 percent of the training for the students and preparation, sometimes has to be redundant and redundant when you have first graders, second graders, third graders, kindergarten.

Sometimes you have to do the same training over and over to get them to understand to leave the

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building, but at all times to listen to the instructor or the teacher.

This may result that we're spending a lot more time focusing on a crisis, which as we all know and as was stated before, there has never been a serious, there has been assaults, I'm sure on our students in schools. You see it in the news. But there hasn't been anything to the extent that was in the testimony.

My concern is just that this may result in less training for these young students and others, and all the way up to the high school for fire alarms, which is primary, which has happened in my responses to the schools.

And since I've never responded to something that would be called a crisis, I would just question this may result in less fire drills and potentially a few more crisis drills. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The distinguished Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, Representative Steve Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in strong support of this Bill before us, because ladies and

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gentlemen, I think our biggest mandate is to keep our children safe.

It's ironic that we take this Bill up because earlier today in the City of Middletown they had a lock-down, because a seven-year-old reported that he saw a man walking toward the school with a shotgun.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a drill that is coordinated between our local fire service whether career or volunteer, our local police department, our local resident trooper, our local EMS and the board of education, and it's important that they work in a collaborative and coordinated way to one, to keep the children that we send to our schools in the State of Connecticut safe.

There is no monies that our town, our city, will have to spend. It's called, ladies and gentlemen, communication. Communication on keeping our children safe in a coordinated way. That's all that this Bill does.

No matter what type of EMS, what type of fire service personnel that you have, it's simply keeping our children safe.

Let me say it again. Simply keeping our children safe. And I think that's the most important mandate

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that we have here as elected officials, ladies and gentlemen, in a coordinated way with our local municipalities.

Again, no matter what type of fire service personnel that you have, no matter what type of law enforcement service that you have, no matter what type of EMS service that you have, it's keeping our children safe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

. The House will come back to order.

The gentleman from Waterbury, the 74th District, Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, Mr. Speaker, may I pose a couple of questions to the proponent of the Bill?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Representative, and believe me, I'll be very brief and I'm very, very sincere in asking those couple questions.

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I listened to Representative Dargan, the distinguished Chairman's speech in reference to our children and respecting them and also making sure that they are safe, and I totally and wholeheartedly agree.

But we are passing a law in here, a regulation per se. How do we disseminate that information to the boards of education and to the cities and to the towns, and as Representative Dargan said, communication.

How do we let them know that on this day we passed this Bill to say that's what they must do?

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the proponent of the Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila, do you care to respond?

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The, when we pass the legislation it becomes public information. It's published. It's maybe reported on in the press, and I'm sure that the local boards of education are going to be aware of it, if not through their associations, through their Representatives here in this room.

There are many avenues for the local boards to become aware of it.

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REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Bless you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, and through you, Mr. Speaker, just to put it in the newspaper or publish it or thinking that they know it, and again, believe me, I am in support of this Bill. The security of children is very important to me.

I just want to make sure that the board of education, most of them, you know, in my town, which is a city, they are volunteers so they have full-time jobs and sometimes they may not even know what is coming down from Hartford.

How do we assure ourselves? Like, do we have a checks and balances? Do we have a method or a vehicle to find out and to track if they have known this information and they are able to apply it?

I just want to make sure that it happens if we say that it should happen. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, as is the case with many, if not most bills that we consider here, there is no specific language in the Bill that requires a formal reporting mechanism, and again, I'm confident

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that each of the boards of ed, local and regional,
will become aware of this legislation and will
implement it accordingly.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, Mr.
Speaker, every town or city has a charter. I know
that my City of Waterbury has a charter. What if we
find out this law that we passed or any other law for
that matter, conflicts with the charter of the City
and they are at conflict?

What happens in a case like this?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila, do you have a response?

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not an expert in
municipal law, but I believe that the state statute
would take precedence and the local municipality would
get advice from its town counsel and perhaps consider
amending its charter.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Noujaim.

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REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, Sir. The gentleman from Stratford,
Representative Miller.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the
proponent.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

Thank you. Is there any age group of school
children that would be excluded from a crisis response
drill?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, there is no
exclusion in the legislation. I am confident that
each school board with its knowledge of its local
schools and students would adjust the response plan
accordingly to the age group of the student.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

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Thank you. And through you, Mr. Speaker, the one thing I have a concern about is in a crisis response drill where some of these agencies, whether it be EMS, volunteers or Red Cross, or whoever it may be, sometimes they want to have a realistic response, crisis response drill where they have people all bandaged up on the lawn of the school or wherever they're conducting this drill and youngsters, particularly kindergarten and first grade, they're very impressionable.

So they would see a body, even though it's just, you know, make believe. They see this person with all kinds of wrappings around his leg or his head or his arms. I just want to be sure that the board of education or whoever is going to be the final authority of this, considers the children of that age.

Again, they take things seriously, and I just don't want to see these kids get off on the wrong foot with a crisis response drill when it's a make believe drill and not a realistic type of affair. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, Sir. Are you ready for the question? If so, staff and guests please come to the Well of the

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House. Members take your seats. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber.

The House is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? If all the Members have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will take a tally.

And Mr. Clerk, if you would kindly announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill Number 760 in concurrence with the Senate.

Total Number Voting	144
Necessary for Passage	73
Those voting Yea	133
Those voting Nay	11
Those absent and not voting	7

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The Bill is passed.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**PUBLIC
SAFETY AND
SECURITY**

**PART 1
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**2009
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arl/gbr PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY 11:00 A.M.
COMMITTEE

REP. DARGAN: Some of the new members of the committee, we try to move the process so try to keep the questions to minimum. If you have further questions after the person is done, the individual, you could go outside and have a conversation with him or the two cochairs are equipped with tasers and we will taser other members of the committee if they ask too many questions.

Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: As you know, I'm the nonviolent one of this pair here, so I give all those duties to him.

REP. CHAPIN: But you scare me more though.

SENATOR STILLMAN: I'm so glad you recognize that Representative Chapin, thank you.

With that -- oh, and also for people who are not familiar with the process here don't be surprised if members get up and leave and come back, because there are other committee meetings going on, and people are pulled in a variety of directions all at the same time right now.

So with that, we'll begin with the Legislators, agency heads and elected officials and Commissioner Thomas you've got the floor.

JAMES M. THOMAS: Thank you very much, Senator.

SB760
SB762

SB761

Good morning Senator Stillman, Representative Dargan and other members of the public safety committee. Just for the record my name is James M. Thomas, and I'm the Commissioner for the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

arl/gbr PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY 11:00 A.M.
COMMITTEE

I'm here to speak on three bills. I've submitted written testimony, so I will not reiterate what's on there.

But the first bill was Senate Bill 760, concerning Crisis Response Drills and Fire Drills. We're very fortunate in Emergency Management Homeland Security to have a great relationship with the fire service. They have to do monthly drills in the schools. We're asking that in lieu of one of the fire drills every three months they do a school emergency drill. It could be for a crisis situation in school, whether we call them a lockdown or a lockout, or a tornado coming to Connecticut, we want them to be prepared for both emergency management and homeland security issues.

First to start it out, we worked with the fire service on the language of the bill. The first drill within 30 days of the school would have to be a fire drill, and that would start the ball rolling. But we would like to see the schools -- it wouldn't cost them any extra money, but in lieu of 12 fire drills, we'd like to three, if we could, emergency drills to train the faculty, staff, and the teachers.

The second bill is Senate Bill 761, it's Enhanced 9-1-1 Database. And basically we've been working with the towns and cities and helping them purchase emergency notification systems. There's many vendors that are out there. Currently the towns are buying that data once a year from different providers. This bill, we've been working with the Department of Public Safety on it and other emergency services. We are proposing that that database be provided free to the towns and cities and also our agency, again, at no cost on a monthly basis so it's more current.

through June 30th, so we're moving the dates to be consistent to help the towns, cities and the state, and Dominion, the power plant, has agreed to the concept.

I will take any questions if you'd like.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Commissioner.

Questions from anyone on the committee?

REP. ESPOSITO: It's not a question, Madam Chair --

SENATOR STILLMAN: Representative Esposito.

REP. ESPOSITO: -- it's just a comment. That's one of the few public officials that speaks within the three minutes. That's great.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Well, we're not quite sure what the reward is for that --

REP. ESPOSITO: I'm (inaudible.)

SENATOR STILLMAN: -- but thank you for mentioning that.

Representative Boukus.

REP. BOUKUS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The crisis response, are teachers provided or is administration provided with what that entails? I mean is that going to be part of the teachers meeting, or is that -- what is that going to be?

JAMES M. THOMAS: Very interesting as you said, each town and city is mandated to submit a plan to our agency, and we review it annually. In that are the school plans. So they do have it. They just don't practice it. So it may

SB760

arl/gbr PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY 11:00 A.M.
COMMITTEE

be on paper. We want to take it from on paper and actually practice it.

The one good thing, I will tell you, on the school grant program, which you all were involved with, for even people to participate we require the signature of the chief elected official, the fire chief, the police chief, the fire marshal, the emergency management director, the superintendent of schools, so we wanted to make it really real. That everybody has a plan, and not only have it, but practice it, and that's what we think will be helpful for us.

REP. BOUKUS: I think this is a great idea. I'm too young, but Representative Esposito remembers the days in schools when you got under your desk and, you know, they were very powerful, you know, to keep this message alive, that we need to be prepared, so, thank you. I think that's a great idea.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you Representative. Any other questions?

Commissioner, I have one question in terms of the funding on 762, where we're changing the -- you're asking us to change the language about the compensation.

JAMES M. THOMAS: Yes, ma'am.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Are we currently paying for training?

JAMES M. THOMAS: No. We have never -- you've never paid for training.

SENATOR STILLMAN: We have never paid for it.

JAMES M. THOMAS: No.

HB 6285

JAMES J. STRILLACCI: I'm Jim Strillacci. I'm the police chief of West Hartford and I represent the Connecticut Police Chief's Association. I'm here to speak on three bills. Two of them you're very -- Commissioner Thomas already spoke to, and I'm going to agree with him on both of those.

First is 760, on school crisis drills. The bill is going to strengthen the current law by requiring a crisis drill rather than permitting it, which we think is a -- a good idea. We want to have local law enforcement input into the drill format, and we want to participate in those drills. You've done a great thing in this Legislature with fire drills. We've got them internalized. Now our teachers and staff and students can do them in their sleep. And we don't lose any kids to fires, and that's a good thing.

Unfortunately, in this country, there's been a series of shootings in schools and other such emergencies. We've lost 164 people to in-school shootings in the United States. So we would be remiss if we didn't plan for it. We want to raise our staff -- both school staff and police and other emergency staff to a level of awareness where they can automatically handle a lockdown or an evacuation if it's needed to protect our kids. This will organize our response and we'll protect our children for generations to come, and we support it.

We also like 761, on the Enhanced 9-1-1 Service Database. We've got some great technology available out there to help emergency services to notify our citizens expeditiously of emergencies. If you got a fuel spill or a hazmat release, you want to do



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY



Public Hearing – February 3, 2009
 Public Safety and Security Committee

T 1

Testimony Submitted by:

Commissioner James M. Thomas
 Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

Good Morning Senator Stillman, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on three bills before you today.

The first bill I would like to comment on is SB 760- AAC Crisis Response Drills and Fire Drills.

This bill would require local and regional boards of education to conduct a crisis response drill, in lieu of a fire drill, once every three months.

The Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security believes school security will be greatly enhanced by regularly exercising crisis response plans. These exercises will better prepare schools to handle any emergency situation.

The second bill I would like to comment on is SB 761- AAC An Enhanced 9-1-1 Service Database.

A number of municipalities have purchased emergency notification systems to communicate with their citizens in the event of an emergency. This bill would allow the state's municipalities and the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) to access the enhanced 9-1-1 database, free of charge, providing the most up to date information available for use with these emergency notification systems.

This use of the current 9-1-1 database will greatly enhance a municipality's ability to protect the safety of its residents by providing vital notifications during an emergency.

The last bill I would like to comment on is SB 762- AAC Mutual Aid or Mobile Support Units and Nuclear Safety Emergency Preparedness Program Plans.

This bill clarifies the application of certain sections of Title 28 when civil preparedness forces are ordered to duty by the Governor or the Commissioner of DEMHS.

The bill also changes the submittal date from November 1st to May 1st and the approval date from December 1st to June 1st for the nuclear safety emergency preparedness program plan. This would allow towns and state agencies to complete necessary budget work before the submittal of the plan.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of these three pieces of legislation.



CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

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Testimony to the Committee on Public Safety
February 3, 2009

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Chiefs Anthony Salvatore & James Strillacci, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

We support **SB #760, AAC School Crisis Response Drills and Fire Drills**. The bill strengthens CGS 10-231, by requiring a crisis drill every three months, rather than permitting it. It also provides for local law-enforcement input in the drill format and participation in the drill itself.

Years of mandatory fire drills have made fatal school fires as rare as polio. A horrendous series of school shootings demands an organized, trained response. This bill will help.

We support **SB #761, AA Creating an Enhanced 9-1-1 Service Database**. Technology exists to allow emergency services to notify great numbers of citizens expeditiously. This technology can be used to speed evacuation of an area facing a natural or man-made disaster, to instruct citizens to shelter in place against a chemical spill, to enlist aid in finding a missing child, an Alzheimer's patient, or a fugitive.

Effectiveness of such a system depends on an up-to-date database of telephone customers, such as is maintained for 9-1-1 service. Current law did not anticipate its use for a notification system; this bill will bring the law abreast of today's technology.

The bill has the potential to save many lives, and we hope you will approve it.

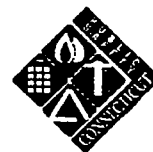
We oppose **HB 6285, AAC Fingerprint Collection**, which would prohibit a police department from limiting fingerprint service to its community's residents. In the current economy all municipalities are strapped for cash and most departments are being asked to cut expenses. Agencies must be free to provide or to limit non-emergency services as its budget requires.

We believe that any individual needing fingerprints should seek the services of the local department or state police troop which serves the town in which he lives or works. As a citizen or a taxpayer, he is free to express satisfaction with service, or the lack thereof, to the appropriate elected or appointed officials.

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERJohn A. Danaher III
CommissionerLieutenant Edwin S. Henion
Chief of Staff

Rep. Stephen Dargan, Co-Chairman
 Sen. Andrea Stillman, Co-Chairman
 Public Safety and Security Committee
 Legislative Office Building
 Hartford, CT 06106

February 3, 2009

SB 760 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL CRISIS RESPONSE DRILLS AND FIRE DRILLS***The Department of Public Safety supports this bill.***

The Department of Public Safety supports this change in legislation to require that local and regional school districts conduct safety drills every three months. In the aftermath of the Virginia Tech and Columbine shooting incidents, it is readily apparent that school districts must practice and develop emergency plans involving public safety emergencies including incidents of potential violence.

The holding of these drills every three months will foster a collaborative working relationship between school districts and law enforcement agencies. Emergency plans will be exercised and planned. If obstacles are encountered, school leaders and law enforcement officials will be able to develop countermeasures and rehearse their plans in accordance with local policies.

In the event of a true emergency, the risk to our children's safety will have been minimized because emergency plans have been rehearsed and executed. Parents and guardians will have confidence that school leaders and police agencies are working in concert to protect our youth from potential danger.

Sincerely,

John A Danaher III
 COMMISSIONER

Department of Public Safety

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