

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 40

By Curtiss

A RESOLUTION to establish a special task force to review current emergency procedures and best practices for security at schools, courthouses, and higher education facilities in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, on December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut, twenty-six individuals, including twenty children, tragically lost their lives at Sandy Hook Elementary School in a mass shooting and, according to reports, the quick action of law enforcement officials and other first responders prevented additional losses of life; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, legislation was enacted by this body to require every school system to adopt comprehensive district-wide and building-level school safety plans regarding crisis intervention, emergency response, and emergency management based upon a template developed by a state safety team appointed by the commissioner of education; and

WHEREAS, these safety plans were required to be developed and implemented no later than 2009 and it is vitally important that these plans be reviewed and reconsidered by appropriate agencies and organizations to address new dangers and potential threats to the security of our students, school employees, and school facilities; and

WHEREAS, the safety of our citizens in public buildings such as courthouses and that of the faculty, administrators, and students at our institutions of higher education must also be carefully reviewed and considered; and

WHEREAS, it is highly appropriate that a special task force be appointed to review emergency plans for public schools, courthouses, and public institutions of higher education in Tennessee and make recommendations to ensure public safety in our state; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that there is hereby established a special task force to be appointed by the governor to review current emergency procedures and best practices for security at schools, courthouses, and higher education facilities in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special task force should include representatives from the department of education, the department of safety, the Tennessee bureau of investigation, the department of homeland security, the Tennessee fire training academy, the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy, the Tennessee Ambulance Service Association, the Tennessee National Guard, the Tennessee emergency management agency, the state board of education, the Tennessee board of regents, the University of Tennessee, the Tennessee higher education commission, the administrative office of the courts, the Tennessee school board association, the Tennessee school resource officers association, and the Tennessee organization of school superintendents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such task force shall be organized and administered through the Tennessee school safety center of the department of education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the special task force shall review the currently recommended state-level safety plans for schools and required template components which include:

- (1) The designation of an emergency response team;
- (2) Policies and procedures for communication with law enforcement officials, parents, and guardians in the event of emergencies and incidents of or threats of violence;
- (3) Policies and procedures relating to school building security, including, where appropriate, the use of school resource officers, security devices, or security procedures, and addressing, where appropriate the use of the building by the public for events other than school activates and the impact the other use may have on building security;
- (4) Procedures for assuring that crisis response and law enforcement officials have access to floor plans, blueprints, schematics, or other maps of the

school interior, school grounds, and road maps of the immediate surrounding area;

- (5) Procedures for coordination of the school safety plan with the resources available through the department of mental health and substance abuse services, the department of intellectual and developmental disabilities or a similar local agency to assure that the school has access to federal, state, or local mental health resources in the event of a violent incident;
- (6) Appropriate violence prevention and intervention strategies such as:
 - (A) Collaborative arrangements with state and local law enforcement officials, designed to ensure that school resource officers and other security personnel are adequately trained, including being trained to de-escalate potentially violent situations, and are effectively and fairly recruited; and
 - (B) Dissemination of informative materials regarding the early detection and identification of potentially threatening behaviors and violent acts to teachers, administrators, school personnel, parents or guardians, and students.
- (7) Policies and procedures for annual school safety training for all students, teachers, and other school personnel; and
- (8) Policies and procedures for the safe evacuation of all students, teachers, other school personnel, and visitors to the school in the event of a serious violent incident or other emergency.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special task force shall review existing safety procedures and emergency protocols in place at the public higher education institutions in this state and review available national reports and expert information as to best practices to ensure student and faculty safety on the campuses of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special task force shall also review existing safety procedures and emergency protocols utilized by the courthouses within the state and

review available national reports and expert information as to best practices for courtroom safety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special task force shall complete its review no later than February 1, 2014, and prepare a written report that should include all recommendations and best practices to be followed and implemented to improve public safety at the schools, higher education institutions, and courthouses of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.