

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION *of* SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Serving Children, Families, and School Psychologists Since 1952



Testimony of **H. Thomas Brant** on behalf of the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists.

I serve as the National Association of School Psychologists-Delegate to Connecticut, Past President, and current Government and Public Relations Chair of the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists, in **opposition** of S.B.1095 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS Education Committee –

March 2, 2023, Representative Currey, Senator McCrory, Representative McCarty, Senator Berthel, Vice Chair Leeper, Vice Chair Winfield and esteemed members of the Education Committee, my name is H. Thomas Brant and I am the Government and Public Relations Chair of the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony in **opposition** of Senate Bill 1095 - AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS. Senate Bill 1095 adds (ii) that individuals who are school counselors, social workers, psychologists, aides or other staff members and have appropriate training and ongoing supports may be assigned the duties of a school resource officer.

S. B. 1095 as written is currently in direct opposition to the National Association of School Psychologists Professional Standards (Professional Ethics) for School Psychologists, and the Connecticut State Department of Education, Guidelines for the Practice of School Psychology (February 2021). I have first-hand detailed knowledge of the CSDE Guidelines for the Practice of School Psychology as I was one of the Advisory and Writing Team members.

To be clear, the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists does **NOT** endorse nor condone any behavior in any public school that further exposes marginalized and minoritized youth to harmful effects of the school to prison pipeline, negative interactions with law enforcement, or increased occurrences of disproportionality in arrests/summons. Our schools need to be a safe and welcoming environment for **all students**, and we must do better as a state to ensure this happens. As such, the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists would encourage the requirement for all law enforcement officers to receive high quality training (such as offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers) before they are permitted onto school grounds. Simply removing or reducing the role of School Resource Officers does not solve the problem. Additionally, the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists want to make clear that we believe there is a distinction between a highly trained School Resource Officer (SRO) and a patrol officer assigned to a school building. As an organization, we believe it is fundamentally inappropriate and a misrepresentation to use these terms interchangeably.

School Psychologists are trained through their three-year master and specialist degree program (a Sixth Year Certificate is required to practice in Connecticut) to provide comprehensive mental health (counseling), collaboration, and assessment (testing) services for **all students** in our schools. We are very well trained and very good at our jobs. We help **all students** thrive. We are not trained as School Resource Officers and certainly not as patrol officers assigned to a school. We collaborate daily with our School Resource Officers and will continue to do so.

Currently, School Psychology is a Designated Shortage Area Provider (DSAP) within the state of Connecticut. This means there are NOT enough School Psychologists to fill the current openings within the State of Connecticut. School Psychologists are leaving the field (traditionally within 5-7 years) and leaving the State of Connecticut in numbers that our association has not experienced before. Additionally, the Connecticut State Department of Education has introduced a new student data system (CT-SEDS) which in many ways has been an abject failure. This new system has further distracted and removed School Psychologists from doing what they were trained to do: work with **all students** to support their social and emotional well-being.

I respectfully ask that you modify this bill to address the concerns that are discussed above. School Psychologists should not and cannot be doing the work of School Resource Officers. If we are asked to do so, this would conflict with our professional standards and not be in the best interests of those we work to support on a daily basis: **all students**.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists,

H. Thomas Brant

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