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NJASRO Praises NJ Legislature for Safe Schools Resource Officer Training Law--Offers Support

Development of Statewide Training Courses and Curriculum to Make NJ Schools Safer

March 17, 2006, Trenton, NJ --- The New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers (NJASRO), the state's leading organization of school resource and school safety officials, met with NJ Senate President Richard Codey to applaud the New Jersey State Legislature for passing the *Safe Schools Resource Officer Training Law*, and offer their support in its implementation. The law requires the Police Training Commission, in consultation with the Attorney General, to develop and offer training courses for all new school resource officers and school liaisons to law enforcement in New Jersey. The courses will provide comprehensive and consistent training in current school resource officer practices and concepts.

"New Jersey's most valuable resource is its children," said John Morella, NJASRO President. "This bill will further provide valuable training to officers on how to teach and protect our students. We applaud the outstanding work the legislature has done to make schools safer, and offer our support to the Police Training Commission and the Attorney General's office to develop an effective training program for future safe school resource officers and school liaisons across New Jersey."

The law was authored and introduced by Assemblywoman Joan Voss of Bergen County in the Assembly, and sponsored by Sen. Fred Madden in the Senate. The bill passed the Assembly 74-2 and the Senate 38-0 and was signed into law by Sen. Codey while he served as Acting Governor on Jan. 6.

"By virtue of their daily interaction with pupils, school resource officers invariably make a strong, early impression of the institution of law enforcement," said Assemblywoman Voss, a former teacher at Fort Lee High School. "The job of a school resource officer involves great responsibility and highly specialized skills; and the State should provide comprehensive and consistent training for those individuals entrusted with these responsibilities."

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Sen. Madden added, “The development of a training course for safe schools resource officers and public school liaisons to law enforcement ensures that our schools can continue providing a secure environment for children and staff.”

School resource officers are police officers permanently assigned to a school or set of schools to serve as a law enforcement officer, law-related counselor and law-related education teacher. In addition to regular law enforcement duties, a safe schools resource officer might be assigned to help educate pupils on their rights and responsibilities under the law, to serve as a liaison between law enforcement and a principal in investigating criminal law violations occurring in a school or on school property, to serve as a liaison between students and social service agencies, to assist school administration and faculty in developing criminal justice programs, and to assist with school activities.

About NJASRO:

The New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers (N.J.A.S.R.O.) is a not-for-profit organization for school based law enforcement officers, school administrators, and school security/safety professionals working as partners to protect students, school faculty and staff and the schools they attend. The true and tested strength in the School Resource Officer program is that it is much more than a curriculum. The SRO Concept can easily be adapted to the needs of ANY community, desiring safe schools, and effective community partnerships. N.J.A.S.R.O. is a Chartered Member of the National Association of School Resource Officers (N.A.S.R.O). For more information go to www.NJASRO.com

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ASSEMBLY SUBSTITUTE FOR
ASSEMBLY, No. 2657
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
211th LEGISLATURE

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 15, 2004

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman JOAN VOSS

District 38 (Bergen)

Assemblyman CRAIG A. STANLEY

District 28 (Essex)

Assemblyman JOSEPH VAS

District 19 (Middlesex)

Assemblyman BRIAN P. STACK

District 33 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Connors

SYNOPSIS

Requires Police Training Commission, in consultation with the Attorney General, to develop training course for safe schools resource officers and school liaisons to law enforcement.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Substitute as adopted by the General Assembly.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/14/2004)

AN ACT concerning training for safe schools resource officers and supplementing Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes and Title 52 of the Revised Statutes

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. The Legislature finds and declares that: many New Jersey public schools employ a safe schools resource officer or, in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies, assign a law enforcement officer to serve as a safe schools resource officer, or assign a school employee to serve as a school liaison to law enforcement; most safe schools resource officers perform many roles, including law enforcement officer, law-related counselor and law-related education teacher; every safe schools resource officer works with and among pupils, teachers and administrators, and many also work with parents; by virtue of their daily interaction with pupils, safe schools resource officers invariably make a strong, early impression of the institution of law enforcement; the job of safe schools resource officer involves great responsibility and highly specialized skills; and the State

should provide comprehensive and consistent training for those individuals entrusted with these responsibilities.

2. a. The Police Training Commission in the Division of Criminal Justice in the Department of Law and Public Safety, in consultation with the Attorney General, shall develop a training course for safe schools resource officers and public school employees assigned by a board of education to serve as a school liaison to law enforcement. The Attorney General, in conjunction with the Police Training Commission, shall ensure that the training course is developed within 180 days of the effective date of this act. The course shall at a minimum provide comprehensive and consistent training in current school resource officer practices and concepts. The course shall be made available to:
 - (1) any law enforcement officer or public school employee referred by the board of education of the public school to which assignment as a safe schools resource officer or school liaison to law enforcement is sought; and
 - (2) any safe schools resource officer or school liaison to law enforcement assigned to a public school prior to the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (now pending before the Legislature as this bill).
 - b. The training course developed by the commission pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall be offered at each school approved by the commission to provide police training courses pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1961, c.56 (C.52:17B-66 et seq.). The commission shall ensure that an individual assigned to instruct the course is proficient and experienced in current school resource officer practices and concepts.
 - c. The commission shall award a certificate to each individual who successfully completes the course.
 - d. The Police Training Commission, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, shall adopt rules and regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to implement the provisions of this section.
3. a. Following the development of the training course pursuant to subsection a. of section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (now pending before the Legislature as this bill) or 180 days following the effective date of this act, whichever occurs first,

a board of education shall not assign a safe schools resource officer to a public school unless that individual first completes the safe schools resource officer training course.

- b. Following the development of the training course pursuant to subsection a. of section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (now pending before the Legislature as this bill) or 180 days following the effective date of this act, whichever occurs first, a board of education shall not assign an employee to serve as a school liaison to law enforcement unless that individual first completes the safe schools resource officer training course.
- c. A person who is assigned to a public school as a safe schools resource officer prior to the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (now pending before the Legislature as this bill) or assigned to serve as a school liaison to law enforcement prior to that date shall not be required to complete the safe schools resource officer training course developed by the Police Training Commission pursuant to subsection a. of section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (now pending before the Legislature as this bill), but may in accordance with that section.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This floor substitute requires the Police Training Commission in the Division of Criminal Justice in the Department of Law and Public Safety, in consultation with the Attorney General, to develop a training course for safe schools resource officers and public school employees assigned by a board of education to serve as a school liaison to law enforcement. The substitute directs the Attorney General, in conjunction with the Police Training Commission, to ensure that the training course is developed within 180 days of the substitute's effective date.

Under the substitute, the course will provide comprehensive and consistent training in current school resource officer practices and concepts. The course will be made available to (1) any law enforcement officer or public school employee referred by the board of education of the public school to which assignment as a safe schools resource officer or school liaison to law

enforcement is sought, or (2) any individual assigned prior to the effective date of the substitute to serve as a safe schools resource officer or school liaison to law enforcement in a public school. Under the substitute, the commission will award a certificate to each individual who successfully completes the course. Additionally, the commission will ensure that an individual assigned to instruct the course is proficient and experienced in current school resource officer practices and concepts.

Following the development of the course or 180 days following the substitute's effective date, whichever occurs first, a board of education will be prohibited from assigning an individual to serve in a school as a safe schools resource officer or a school liaison to law enforcement unless the individual first successfully completes the training program. This requirement will not, however, apply to an individual assigned prior to effective date of the substitute, although the training course will be available to such persons.

Generally, a safe schools resource officer is a police officer permanently assigned to a school or set of schools to serve as a law enforcement officer, law-related counselor and law-related education teacher. In addition to regular law enforcement duties, a safe schools resource officer might be assigned to help educate pupils on their rights and responsibilities under the law, to serve as a liaison between law enforcement and a principal in investigating criminal law violations occurring in a school or on school property, to serve as a liaison between students and social service agencies, to assist school administration and faculty in developing criminal justice programs, and to assist with school activities.