

For Immediate Release

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Leaders of the Florida House and Senate Announce School Safety Proposal

Tallahassee—Leaders of the Florida Senate and Florida House of Representatives today announced a comprehensive package of legislation to improve the safety and security of Florida students and schools. Senate legislation will be heard in the Committee on Rules, chaired by Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto (R-Ft. Myers), on Monday, February 26, 2018.

“It has been one week since I visited Stoneman Douglas High School, but the scene of horror that we viewed was so troubling it feels like we were there earlier today. I cannot imagine how those who survived the attack must feel as they face the vivid memories of that day,” said Senate President Joe Negron (R-Stuart).

“Earlier this week I had the opportunity to celebrate the life of Peter Wang and to learn about his hopes and dreams to one day serve our country as a member of the United States Army. Those dreams, and the hopes and dreams of each person senselessly murdered last week will never be realized because of the criminal acts of one person,” continued President Negron. “Nothing we will do in the State Legislature will fill the void created in the families of the victims, their school, or their community, but we can honor their memory by taking the appropriate steps at the federal, state and local levels to help reduce the chance that a tragedy like this could ever happen again.”

A summary of the proposal announced today is attached. The following pieces of Senate legislation will be available via the Senate website later today.

- Senate Proposed Bill 7022 – Firearm Safety
- Senate Proposed Bill 7024 – Public Records
- Senate Proposed Bill 7026 – School Safety

Video of today’s announcement, including remarks from Senate President-Designate Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton) and Senator Benacquisto is available at www.TheFloridaChannel.org.

For more information, please visit www.FLSenate.gov.

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School Safety Proposal

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❖ Firearm Safety

- Establish new restrictions on purchase and ownership of firearms (all types)
 - (1) Increase the minimum age for purchasing a firearm to 21 years except for persons in law enforcement and active military personnel.
 - (2) Establish a 3-day waiting period for purchase of firearms except for concealed weapons permit holders or persons who complete a 16-hour hunter safety course approved by the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Provides time for criminal history checks.
 - (3) Ban bump stocks.

- Enhance restrictions for persons subject to involuntary examination and commitment (Baker Act)
 - (1) Provide law enforcement and the court with the tools to enhance public safety by temporarily restricting firearm possession by person who is undergoing a mental health crisis and when there is evidence of a threat of violence.
 - (2) Prohibit a person adjudicated mentally defective or committed to a mental institution from owning or purchasing a firearm or obtaining concealed weapon license. Current law prohibits purchase, but does not limit possession.

❖ School Safety

- Improve school security capabilities through additional school resource and security officers, school hardening, programs. Establish safe school and security standards, review school safety and security plans, implement a school safety specialist training program, and update risk assessment procedures. Require training for school safety specialists as well as students and faculty. Require emergency drills for active shooter and hostage situations involving students, school personnel, and law enforcement experts.

- A “marshal” program to enhance safety and security in schools through the use of law enforcement trained and screened school personnel who function as part of school security teams.

- Improve responses to students presenting a danger to themselves or others
 - (1) Codify and enhance the activities of the multiagency network for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities (SEDNET).
 - (2) Require each school district to designate a school safety specialist and each school to establish a threat assessment team to provide a coordinated approach to evaluating and responding to students who pose a threat of violence.
 - (3) Remove barriers preventing school district and law enforcement authorities from referring students appropriately to mental health services or law enforcement.

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❖ Coordination, Information Sharing and Other System Improvements

- Create an affirmative obligation for personnel in schools, law enforcement, and service agencies to communicate and work together when serving the same at-risk youth.
- Establish a statewide commission to investigate system failures in the Parkland school shooting and prior mass shooting events and make recommendations for system improvements.
 - (1) Analyze evidence from the Parkland shooting and other mass shooting events in Florida to determine the extent to which failures in communication or coordination contributed to an inability to prevent deaths and injuries.
 - (2) Identify available tools, such as the Fusion Center or the Judicial Inquiry System, and recommend ways these resources can be used more effectively to identify risks and threats.
 - (3) Recommend changes in procedures or policies necessary to enhance communication among schools, law enforcement, and social service agencies.

❖ Mental Health

- Increase funding for mental health training, screening, counseling and services in schools.

❖ Public Records Exemptions

- Protect victims and their families by preventing disclosure of certain personal information.