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Received, Clerk, Supreme Court

B. M. L.
JUL 19 2019

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

Case No. SC19-240

**FIRST INTERIM REPORT OF THE TWENTIETH STATEWIDE GRAND JURY
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA.**

In the short time since this Statewide Grand Jury has convened, we have heard and seen evidence of noncompliance with the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Safety Act, SB 7026 (2018), and the Implementation of Legislative Recommendations of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission, SB 7030 (2019), in numerous school districts in the State of Florida. We have heard days of testimony from Department of Education, school district and law enforcement officials regarding administrative hurdles, increased costs to their districts, and shortages of the qualified employees necessary to bring these districts into compliance with these important safety measures. Without discussing the specifics of their explanations, suffice it to say we find this testimony wholly unpersuasive.


As of the writing of this Interim Report, it has been 545 days since the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School; it has been 497 days since SB 7026 was signed into law by Governor Rick Scott; it has been 72 days since SB 7030 was signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis; and it is now approximately 24 days until the start of the 2019-20 school year. We find that law enforcement and school district officials have had sufficient time to bring their districts into compliance with these laws, and we fully expect that these officials will use the remaining days before the first day of the 2019-20 school year to do whatever it takes to bring these districts into full compliance.



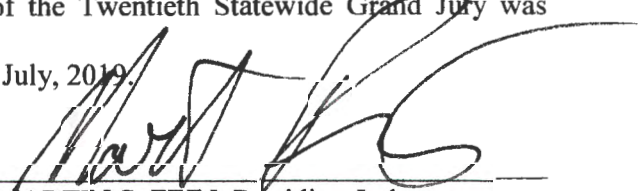
Finally, we have seen and heard troubling evidence of conflicts between school district officials and law enforcement agencies regarding who is ultimately responsible for executing and enforcing SB 7026 and SB 7030. It appears that at least some of these officials have failed—or refused—to accept their responsibility for school safety. Protecting and securing our schools and every life within them is everyone’s responsibility and it is of utmost importance. The goals of securing our schools and educating our children are not in conflict. They require cooperation between law enforcement and school district officials. The responsibility of securing our schools is not a matter to be passed from agency to agency, it is not a budget item to be haggled over, and it is not an agenda issue to be whittled down by negotiation into minimum legally-sufficient actions. Now is the time for everyone tasked with implementing and enforcing these laws to take action.

This Statewide Grand Jury will continue to investigate, monitor and exercise our authority to ensure full compliance with SB 7026 and SB 7030, as requested by the Governor and ordered by the Florida Supreme Court, throughout our term.

Respectfully submitted to the Honorable Martin S. Fein, Presiding Judge, this 19 day of July, 2019.

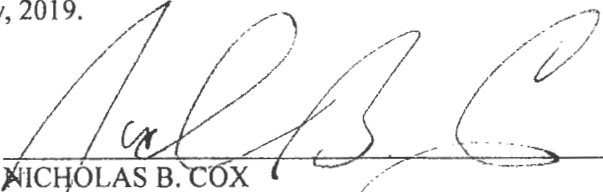
 _____, Foreperson, Juror # 7,
Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida.

THE FOREGOING First Interim Report of the Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury was returned before me in open court, this 19 day of July, 2019.

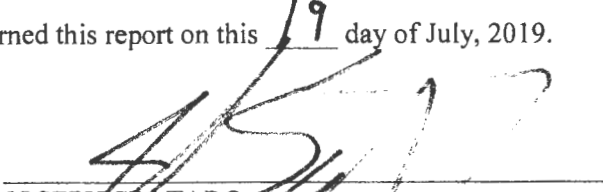


HON. MARTIN S. FEIN, Presiding Judge
Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida

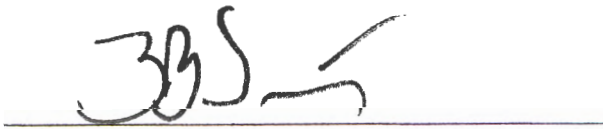
I, Nicholas B. Cox, Statewide Prosecutor and Legal Advisor, Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida, hereby certify that I, as authorized and required by law, have advised the Grand Jury which returned this report on this 19 day of July, 2019.


NICHOLAS B. COX
Statewide Prosecutor
Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida

I, Joseph Spataro, Deputy Chief Assistant Statewide Prosecutor and Assistant Legal Advisor, Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida, hereby certify that I, as authorized and required by law, have advised the Grand Jury which returned this report on this 19 day of July, 2019.


JOSEPH SPATARO
Deputy Chief Assistant Statewide Prosecutor
Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida

I, Jeremy B. Scott, Assistant Statewide Prosecutor and Assistant Legal Advisor, Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida, hereby certify that I, as authorized and required by law, have advised the Grand Jury which returned this report on this 19 day of July, 2019.


JEREMY SCOTT
Assistant Statewide Prosecutor
Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida