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To:

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Subject: School Safety, Alternative to Arming Teachers ~ Website email from James (Jim) Thomas

Lt. Gov. Bryant My name is Jim Thomas. I live in Hampton, SC. First off I would like to thank you, and say I am proud of the work that you do for the people of our fine state and local community. I am a 29 year old male, with two young children who will be entering SC public schools in the coming years. I work full time as a Firefighter / EMT, and my wife is a Teacher in the SC public school system. Because of both of our jobs, we both see first hand the struggles that today's society face. We also see first hand how our government officials struggle at times to find the best solutions to our problems. As with most Americans, the topic of school safety has become a talking point in our home. This is even more important to me, because of my children and my wife. It seems that one of the most popular solution suggestions to the recent school shootings is to arm teachers in the schools. Or to allow concealed carry for teachers in the schools. While I am a firm believer that the most effective and fastest solution to an active shooter is the armed citizen, I do not believe that arming teachers will be an effective solution. After speaking to my wife, and other teachers on the topic, I believe that most teachers DO NOT want the responsibility to carry, protect, secure, and if necessary use a firearm inside a school. Teachers form a deep, personal bond with their students. I believe that many teachers feel as though armed teachers in schools would be more of a liability rather than a solution. But I believe there could be an alternative! Many local Police Depts and Sheriff's Offices provide school resource services to local school districts. But most if not all are not able to place an officer in every school. I believe the biggest reason for this is lack of adequate funding. I believe that the State of SC should form a state wide agency, along the lines of SC Public Schools Police Dept. This state agency would have state wide jurisdiction, and would be responsible for placing and maintaining a police officer in EVERY SC Public School every school day. Having a state agency perform this task instead of local agencies would ensure that staffing, training, equipment, training, policies, and enforcement consequences are equal and standard across the entire state. This would eliminate local agencies from having to fund these positions, and would ensure that all public schools have equal access to law enforcement. As with any new agency or position, funding is always an issue. But having a SC Public School Police Dept would mean that every taxpayer in the state shares this bill. I believe that the safety of our SC children, teachers, and schools are worth this expense. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to any discussion on the topic. Thank you for your time and your service! Respectfully, Jim Thomas

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