



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

H.R. 1593

“Coordinating and Leveraging Activities for School Security Act” Introduced by Representative Donald M. Payne, Jr. (D-NJ)

In the 19 years since the horrific massacre at Columbine High School, left 13 people dead¹, our schools remain incredibly vulnerable to mass shootings. Between January and May 2018, school shootings averaged one per week.² Starting in 2012, when a lone gunman killed 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut,³ the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) began directing a series of actions within the Department to help improve school and campus security, but, at the time, no official was named to coordinate the Department’s efforts. More recently, on March 12, 2018, DHS developed a plan to improve school safety and preparedness.⁴ The issuance of the March 2018 plan was a step in the right direction, however, to date, no official or body within DHS has been directed to ensure that the elements of the plan are implemented effectively.

To position DHS to be impactful with respect to school security in its efforts to address the escalating risk to school security, Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr. (D-NJ), the Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security’s Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery introduced the ***Coordinating and Leveraging Activities for School Security (CLASS) Act*** to direct DHS to establish a council to coordinate activities, plans, and policies of the Department aimed at bolstering school security against acts of terrorism, an active shooter, and other threats.

The CLASS Act would—

- Establish a coordinating council within DHS to ensure that the Department’s school security activities, plans, and policies are coordinated;
- Bring together the Under Secretary for Strategy, Policy, and Plans, the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Protection (CISA), FEMA, the Secret Service, the Office of Academic Engagement, and the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs on the council; and
- Require the Secretary of Homeland Security to report to relevant Congressional Committees annually on the council’s efforts.

¹ CNN Staff, “Columbine High School Shooting Fast Facts,” CNN. March 25, 2018. Accessed on September 11, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/18/us/columbine-high-school-shootings-fast-facts/index.html>.

² Saeed Ahmed and Christina Walker, “There has been, on average, 1 school shooting every week this year,” CNN. May 25, 2018. Accessed on September 11, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/02/us/school-shootings-2018-list-trnd/index.html>.

³ CNN Staff, “5 years after Sandy Hook, the victims have not been forgotten,” CNN. December 14, 2017. Accessed on September 11, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/12/14/us/sandy-hook-newtown-shooting-victims-profiles/index.html>.

⁴ Department of Homeland Security, “DHS Working To Enhance School Safety, Increase Preparedness,” March 12, 2018, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2018/03/12/dhs-working-enhance-school-safety-increase-preparedness>.