

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Education
For HB 121

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Hearing Date: March 25, 2025 8:00 AM

Kayla Sigue

Texas Student Council on School Safety
Leander, TX

As a student currently advocating for school safety, I'd to say the undeniable: we need better safety measures in schools. My school is quite small. We have no police officers on campus. At times I've felt unsafe and honestly anything better than our current system would help. It's a shame I feel unsafe in any learning environment.

Teagn Godfrey

Self, Boerne High School Student
Boerne, TX

I am Teagn Godfrey and I am a Senior at Boerne High School in Boerne Texas. I am here to share with you my experience over the last 4 years of my life. My Freshman year I remember walking into school not a care in the world, showing my student ID maybe once for a random check and shoving it deep into my backpack never to be seen again. My Sophomore year, it was the same routine, this piece of plastic drifting to the back of my mind, not to be remembered. However, on May 24th, 2022 19 students and 2 teachers were brutally killed in a school less than 2 hours away from me. What we now solemnly remember as the Uvalde Shooting. Everyday since then my school has increased its security efforts. Adding a team of 4 security guards on top of our SRO. Hourly door checks to make sure all the doors are locked. And daily ID checks. Every morning when I come to school I must prove I am a student there, that piece of plastic that used to lay with broken pencils and crumbled up assignments at the bottom of my bag, now required to hang around my neck at every moment of every school day, reminding me that if I am shot and or unalived that that piece of plastic is my dog tags the only way I will be identified to be reunited with my parents. This is my reality. However you have the choice to change this reality. We can be the change here and now. We, the people sitting in this room can make a choice that will not just stay within these walls but ricochet into the State of Texas, possibly even creating a domino effect into the other 49 states of this nation, so that every teacher, every staff member, every student, I can walk into school every morning from the sound of that first bell and know, I will be able to see my family once more tonight. HB 121 would give me a greater sense of peace, and security when I go to school everyday.

Bonnie Moriarty

Round Rock ISD
Round Rock, TX

This would really help me as an educator to feel more safe. With a school so large, it is difficult to get help needed in dire times. This would greatly improve safety and provide a lot more feelings of comfort.

MARK ROWDEN

Highland Park ISD Police Dept.

Dallas, TX

Schools need to be able to consider other options regarding provision of school safety. Technology has evolved and we have seen great success with drones and robotic options. These options broaden the capabilities of law enforcement to provide a safe and secure learning environment for our students. I strongly urge our legislators to consider providing us the legal standing to utilize these technologies for the following reasons:

1.

MARK ROWDEN

Highland Park ISD Police Dept.

Dallas, TX

Please see the previous comments that were submitted prematurely. As stated previously, below are the reasons for consideration of these option: 1- Officer safety- the ability to utilize drone and robotic technology in addressing an active threat situation is key to officer survival and mission completion. 2. These technologies are a force multiplier and would supplement a response. In addition, many schools are unable to find qualified candidates for officer positions and this would provide another option. 3. We are currently using drone technology in a monitoring stance. having the option of using drones to actually address threats and/or supplement officers would be a tremendous asset. Drones and robotics also create a response time to any threat beyond what can be provided with a purely human response. Please consider the language included in HB 462 for this bill and or combining the two.

JP Moseley, Chief of Police

Mt Vernon ISD Police Department

Mt Vernon, TX

I am making these comments in support of utilizing law enforcement (LE) and other technology in our schools, not only to protect staff, students and property, but to create efficiencies and reduce the threat to our law enforcement officers. The utilization of technology to reduce the risk to officers by utilizing drone and sensor technology that will improve the officers' situational awareness when responding to a threat, allowing them to reach the threat safer and faster.

Drones and other sensor technology will have the efficient capability to provide a quick on-site response to identify and potentially counter a school threat for the majority of Texas schools.

This technology will create a force multiplication effect in a single officer, rural school locations, utilizing this technology will monitor locations 24/7 in all types of weather and without the need to pay overtime or hire additional staff.

Jackie Besinger

National Alliance for Education Freedom

Austin, TX

Against. The relentless encroachment of the Texas Education Agency must cease immediately; rather than empowering this agency, we should be championing the underfunded initiatives championed by our corrupt governor. This proposed bill undermines local control, stripping communities of their ability to govern their educational systems effectively. Instead of facilitating agency overreach, it is crucial that you advocate for policies that truly support Texas students and schools, ensuring that local needs are prioritized over bureaucratic interests.

Russ Johnson, mr

Self

Lorena, TX

I recently discovered an unintended consequence of the Capture or Use of Biometric Identifier Act (CUBI), Texas Business & Commerce Code §503.001. Although CUBI was meant to regulate the commercial use of biometric data collection by large tech companies—i.e., protecting consumers from privacy violations in retail or advertising contexts—one of the largest security manufacturers (OEM) has disabled its facial recognition features for all Texas clients over compliance concerns. I have learned that other providers have followed suit. While I appreciate CUBI's original intent, schools clearly aren't using these tools commercially.

In practice, districts pay for sophisticated security systems but lose key features crucial for proactively identifying and mitigating threats and significantly reducing video research time. From visitor management tools like Raptor to mandatory staff and volunteer background checks, schools already handle extensive personally identifiable data with robust safeguards. The real challenge is leveraging every available tool for better security response so that school staff can be more efficient, effective, and better served.

By modernizing the law for schools and municipalities, we remove ambiguity and allow vendors to maintain essential AI-driven features without fearing misapplication.

Specifically, legislation should:

1. Exclude schools and municipalities from the commercial restrictions of §503.001 when technology is used strictly for security.
2. Establish clear safeguards around data encryption, controlled access, and audit logging.
3. Require vendor transparency on data protection policies and any third parties with potential access.
4. Authorize the use of state safety allotment funds for AI-based security tools.
5. Mandate local policies that ensure responsible oversight and ethical use of AI and biometric systems.

In addition to these safeguards, making all tools in the marketplace available—especially now, with the state increasing funding for schools—not only gives districts more options for campus safety, but also promotes continuous innovation in developing security technologies. With clearer legislative guidance, vendors would be encouraged to invest further in research and upgrades, resulting in more advanced, effective, and compliant solutions for Texas schools.

The goal is to simply clarify that CUBI does not apply to schools and municipalities when AI and biometric technologies are used solely for security purposes. Schools are not commercial entities, and their use of these tools should not be restricted by laws intended to regulate private-sector data practices. By explicitly exempting school security applications, we remove the ambiguity that has led vendors to disable essential features.

Michael Belsick

Fredericksburg Tea Party

Fredericksburg, TX

I am FOR HB 121.

Eve Margolis

Self

Austin, TX

TEA does not need to be in the business of hiring armed officers. TEA needs to focus on retaining educators. Most likely the financial burden would fall on the schools.

Jeff Coombs

self

Austin, TX

I have been in the security industry for decades serving K12 and other governmental entities. Enhancing and being able to implement the bare minimum of AI features in today's environment is critical. Clients of mine in other states that CAN leverage this technology have a much safer and more proactive security posture all around.

KATHY TURNER

SELF

McGregor, TX

I SUPPORT

Michael Belsick

Fredericksburg Tea Party

Fredericksburg, TX

Iam FOR HB 121.

Stephen Williamson

Eula ISD Police

Clyde, TX

I serve as the Chief of Police of a school district police department. Funds are limited to hire qualified people to keep schools safe. Qualified and capable people are even more limited than funding. Having viable options to support the limited personnel is imperative. On a normal good day defensive measures are not used but need to be ready to be deployed quickly. When bad things occur immediate response is the only way to stop the bad things. A 9-1-1 call and a ten minute response from local law enforcement is a late answer. A bad evil person(s) can injure and kill many people in ten to twelve minutes. Having people that are prepared and in place is the optimal option. Due to lack of appropriate people and funding avenues making technology and equipment that can overcome the hurdles and obstacles and enhance the level of safety is important. Drones are one aspect that can be utilized to defend against an evil person. Drones are highly maneuverable and can function in side buildings and in areas where many people are and can overcome obstacles and provide the limited law enforcement information and increase officer safety by reducing law enforcement having to take unknown risks. Drones and other technology can effectively distract and slow down evil people and even deploy force. Stopping evil people is the most important task. I encourage you to support the use of drones and other technology that can enhance law enforcement response time and efforts while decreasing the risks law enforcement officers are placed in to do the job. I specifically recommend Mithril Defense as their concept puts highly experienced combat drone pilots in place to be instant responders to many school campuses. Networking allows many locations to become safer and overcome barriers that have long limited safety preparations.

Christy Olcese

Self, Sales Director

Austin, TX

Please clarify language to change legislation to allow for non-commercial use of AI and biometrics for school safety and security. Thank you.