

The STOP School Violence Act

Sponsored by Senator Hatch

Our Challenge

Each year there are thousands of acts of youth violence in our schools, including assault, bullying, suicide, and homicide. Youth often display warning signs or signals before taking any action: 80% of school shooters tell someone of their plans (69% tell more than one person) and 70% of those who complete suicide tell someone of their plans or give another warning sign.

Unfortunately, the youth and adults who observe these signs or signals do not always recognize what they are seeing or do not report what they observe. Through training about these warning signs, school security infrastructure improvements, and better coordination with law enforcement, we have a real opportunity to STOP school violence before it happens.

Federal Response

Following tragedies like Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, and now Parkland, the federal government has funded short-term school safety initiatives focused on crisis response, active shooters, and physical infrastructure. While these are important investments, we have not yet seen sustained strategies to STOP violence in our schools. Our students, educators, and local law enforcement need the tools and support to take proactive and continuous steps toward improving school safety and security.

STOP School Violence Act

The Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing School Violence Act of 2018, or the STOP School Violence Act, reauthorizes and amends the 2001-2009 bipartisan Secure Our Schools Act to offer Department of Justice grants to states to help our schools implement proven, evidence-based programs and technologies that STOP school violence before it happens. The STOP School Violence Act would:

- **Reauthorize the Bipartisan Secure Our Schools Act:** Authorizes the Department of Justice to make grants to states for training, technology and equipment, and technical assistance to stop school violence, aimed at the entire youth ecosystem: students, school personnel, and local law enforcement.
- **Offer State-based Grants:** Permits grants to fund evidence-based programs and practices to:
 1. Train everyone in the school ecosystem – students, school personnel, and local law enforcement – to identify and intervene to stop school violence;
 2. Make improvements to school security infrastructure to deter and respond to threats of school violence, including the development and implementation of anonymous reporting systems for threats of school violence;
 3. Develop and operate school threat assessment and crisis intervention teams, to preemptively triage threats before tragedy hits; and
 4. Facilitate coordination between schools and local law enforcement.
- **Enhance Grant Accountability:** Requires training programs, technology and equipment, and threat assessment and crisis intervention strategies funded by these grants to be evidence-based, ensuring that money is used for proven, effective improvements to school safety and security.
- **Use Existing Funding:** Authorizes \$75 million for FY 2018 and \$100 million annually for the next ten years in grants, to be partially offset by directing appropriations from the National Institute of Justice's Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI). After five years of funding research and pilot programs, it is time to use that money to implement proven, evidence-based programs and technology to prevent school violence.