

HCS HB 3174 -- EMERGENCY RESPONSES IN SCHOOLS

SPONSOR: Justus

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Crime and Public Safety by a vote of 15 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 3174.

Beginning in the 2027-28 school year, this bill requires that school districts and charter schools implement a wearable panic alert system, known as "Alyssa's Law". The system will integrate with local public safety, and transmit 911 calls and mobile activations.

The bill requires that each school employee be provided with a wearable panic alert device and specifies requirements for the panic alert device including specific notifications relating to emergency devices and communication.

Any records, information, photographs, audio and visual presentations, schematic diagrams, surveys, recommendations, or consultations, or portions thereof, relating directly to the physical security or fire safety of a school building or revealing security or fire safety systems held by any emergency response agency is confidential and exempt from the open record request provisions of Chapter 610, RSMo.

The bill establishes the "Alyssa Alhadeff Fund" for the purposes of the administration of the provisions of this program.

The bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to create a list of qualified vendors for the panic alert system.

On or before July 1, 2028, this bill requires each school district and charter school to install at least one "master key box", as such term is defined in current law, at each school. Each master key box must be installed at an appropriate location to permit law enforcement officers emergency access to each building and room on school grounds. The school district or charter school will determine the precise location of each master key box after consultation with local law enforcement agencies, and provide local law enforcement agencies with a key or access code that permits access to the contents of the master key box. Each master key box shall contain certain items specified in the

bill, such as keys to each building and room on school grounds and accurate maps labeling access points, locations of critical emergency response aids, and the areas around each building. The contents of a master key box and the information contained therein shall not be a public record and shall not be made available for public examination. An employee of a school district or charter school is immune from civil liability for damages arising out of the installation and use of master key boxes unless the employee acted with gross negligence or bad faith.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

**PROPOSERS:** Supporters say that this bill establishes "Alyssa's Law", which allows school employees to wear panic buttons for emergency situations, and the buttons allow mapping and contacting first responders in real time. This would be helpful in situations where there is classroom distress such as behavior or medical emergencies. Several states have enacted similar laws. There are vendors schools can choose from to obtain the panic alert buttons. Alyssa's mother testified and told the story of how her daughter was killed in a school shooting in Florida eight years ago, mostly because she was not alerted fast enough of the emergency situation. The principle of this is simple and it could save many lives. It would alert first responders with real time accuracy, when every second matters.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Justus; and Lori Alhadeff, Make Our Schools Safe.

**OPPOSERS:** There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.