

BACKLASH TO THE MOVEMENT FOR POLICE FREE SCHOOLS:

Efforts to Pass State Laws Requiring Police in Schools in 2022



OVERVIEW

Prior to 2022, Florida was the only state that required police in schools. However, we are now witnessing backlash in response to powerful youth organizing at the local level to remove police from schools. One form of this backlash has included attempts by state elected officials to require school resource officers (SROs) in all public

school districts in their states, regardless of the will of people in those local districts.

In 2022, six state legislatures proposed bills that would require police in schools. Unfortunately, one of these bills (HB63 in Kentucky) passed. Each of these harmful, pro-SRO bills is described below.

LAWS PASSED IN 2022 THAT REQUIRE POLICE IN SCHOOLS

1. Kentucky Revised Statute § 158.4414(1)-(2), (5) (HB63)

This law requires at least one armed, full-time SRO at every school campus. If funding or qualified personnel are not available, the law allows districts to fulfill the requirement on a campus-by-campus basis only with written approval by the state.

FAILED 2022 BILLS TO REQUIRE SROs IN SCHOOLS

1. Hawaii SB2450

The bill would have required SROs or guards at every public elementary school and state pre-kindergarten program. A version of the bill (HB2456) passed the House, but died in committee in the Senate.

2. Rhode Island H8310

This bill—which was scheduled for a hearing but did not pass and was postponed indefinitely—would require at least two SROs at every public school.

FAILED 2022 BILLS TO REQUIRE SROs IN SCHOOLS (CONT.)

3. South Carolina H3314

This bill sought to require one SRO for every 500 students in every public school. The bill did not make it out of committee.

4. Wisconsin HB969

This bill would have required an armed SRO in a public school if, during the prior school year: A) 100 or more incidents occurred at the school in one semester; and B) at least 25 of those incidents resulted in an arrest. The bill passed the House, but failed in the Senate.

5. Virginia SB415

The bill would have required at least one school resource officer in every public elementary and secondary school, without exception. Failure to comply would have made the school district ineligible for any state grants. A version of the bill (HB37) passed the House, but it was ultimately defeated in the Senate Education and Health committee.

CONCLUSION

Each of the bills discussed above threatens the progress that young people have made towards safe and supportive school environments. We encourage local advocates to keep

an eye for out similar bills proposed in their states in the coming years and for resources, visit:

POLICEFREESCHOOLS.ORG