

ENOUGH:

A CALL FOR ACTION AGAINST SCHOOL AND GUN VIOLENCE

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SROs, also known as school resource officers, and gun laws have been quite the controversial topic for the past decade. Due to their controversy many schools all over America have terminated their use of SROs. Though with the recent increase of gun violence all over America the thought of bringing SROs back into schools as well as bettering our gun reform laws all over America is being heavily debated. Many students and families are still against bringing SROs back into schools whilst others believe the best way to keep students and faculty safe is by bring SROs back.

SROs have historically been around since the late 1950s when the first school resource officers were introduced to a high school in Flint, Michigan to promote a healthy and cordial relationship between law enforcement and students. Due to their success in Michigan, SRO programs extended all over the nation in states like Arizona, Ohio, California, and Florida.

The SRO programs in these states were also extremely successful in the late 20th century especially the SRO program in Hillsborough County, Florida. The SROs that were introduced to these middle schools weren't just seen as intimidating and scary people but more as teachers and counselors due to their approach on students. These officers weren't in these schools just walking around intimidating students they took the time to build relationships with them and actually care for those they were meant to be protecting.

The controversy of SROs first began in the early 2000s when students no longer felt as though they were being protected by SROs instead, they felt as though they were being targeted in their own learning environments that should be safe spaces for all students. Due to the prejudices of certain SROs many students felt as though they were being racially targeted or just discriminated against simply for the way they looked and presented themselves. Most SROs were placed in schools with high percentages of students who were a part of some minority. With that factor into consideration many students felt as though they were the reason SROs were introduced into schools many students felt as though they were the ones being criminalized instead of actually threats from outside sources.



"I, officer name, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter."



Due to all these reasons SROs and their serviceability began to be reconsidered by the school board as well as students and families. On August 25, 2021, DMPS officially removed all SROs from district buildings, including schools. At the time the removal of SROs felt as though it was a victory for students to feel free whilst at school instead of criminalized but currently many members of the DMPS community are rethinking this decision. Due to the increase of violence around the DMPS community especially around the High Schools the safety of all has risen concern.

On March 7, 2022, a fatal shooting occurred after 2:40pm where one 15-year-old boy named Jose Lopez was murdered while two female students were crucially wounded at Des Moines East High School. On January 23 of this year two students at Starts Right Here were fatally gunned down whilst at school these students were, 18-year-old Gianni Dameron and 16-year-old