

ELIMINATE STUDENT SAFETY ACT SUNSET

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House Bill 5850 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Brandt Iden
House Committee: Appropriations
Complete to 4-23-18

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5850 would amend the Student Safety Act (2013 PA 183), which created the Student Safety Fund, to eliminate the sunset on the Act, which currently is scheduled to expire on October 1, 2021.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Student Safety Act –The Student Safety Act was enacted to provide students and teachers a confidential and easily accessible means to report violent or threatening behavior to trained authorities positioned to help or intervene. The Act's requirements generally were based on a reporting program called "Safe2Tell" created in Colorado following the Columbine school shooting. The Act requires the Attorney General to establish a program for receiving information from the public regarding potential self-harm, harm to others, or criminal acts directed at students, school employees, or schools. The Act also requires the program to include a reporting hotline that is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The legislature extended the Act's sunset to October 1, 2021, in 2017 PA 100.

OK2Say – The OK2Say program, a prevention-based reporting system, was launched in September 2014 to fulfill the Act's hotline requirement. The Attorney General is responsible for administrative and operational oversight of OK2Say according to the Act's guidelines, and the Michigan State Police (MSP) operates and staffs the hotline and under a memorandum of understanding with the Attorney General. The hotline receives reports and information via mobile text, phone, email, and through its website and mobile app. The definition of "school" as used in the Act extends the program's services to public, private, denominational, or parochial schools offering developmental kindergarten or any grade from 1 through 12.

Reports and information received by OK2Say hotline technicians are reviewed, analyzed as necessary, and directed to local law enforcement, school, or community mental health officials when it is deemed prudent. OK2Say personnel must be provided crisis management training and must be knowledgeable about mental health services available in the community and all other matters and services determined to be relevant for the program. According to the annual report required by the Act, in 2016 the program received 3,359 tips, an increase of 54% from 2015¹. The top three tip categories are bullying, suicide threats, and "other" which includes harassment, depression, anxiety, and stress.

¹ Ok2Say 2016 annual report: http://www.michigan.gov/ok2say/0,5413,7-309-74154_74156---,00.html.

Student Safety Fund – The Act created the Student Safety Fund and provides that money in the fund at the close of the fiscal year remains in the fund and does not lapse to the General Fund. The Act allows the Attorney General to expend funds to do the following:

- Pay for administrative costs incurred by the Attorney General.
- Pay a vendor (the MSP) for operating the hotline.
- Promote public awareness of the program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no direct fiscal impact on the Attorney General or MSP.

An initial deposit of \$3.5 million General Fund (GF/GP) into the Student Safety Fund supported the costs of Ok2Say within the Attorney General and MSP for the first four years. The House omnibus budget bill for fiscal year (FY) 2018-19, House Bill 5578, would appropriate \$470,000, the estimated remaining balance in the Student Safety Fund, and \$2.3 million GF/GP for the Attorney General to administer and promote Ok2Say.

House Bill 5578 also includes \$618,800 GF/GP for FY 2018-19 for MSP to staff and operate the call center.

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