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Assembly California Legislature

JIM CUNNEEN

ASSEMBLYMEMBER, TWENTY-FOURTH DISTRICT
*Representing the communities of: Campbell, Cupertino,
Los Altos, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, San Jose, Saratoga, and Sunnyvale*

COMMITTEES:
EDUCATION
ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY
TOXIC MATERIALS
PUBLIC SAFETY, Vice-Chair

April 30, 1999

Honorable James Beall, Jr.
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
70 West Hedding Street
San Jose, CA 95110

Dear Jim:

In the wake of the tragedy at Columbine High School, many parents, teachers, and community leaders are questioning our children's safety at public schools. The shooting rampage in Littleton, Colorado has forced all of us to take a second look at security programs in our schools. In light of the tragic events in Colorado, it is imperative that the Legislature and local school boards address this problem.

In an effort to address these concerns, the Assembly Public Safety Committee held a special session to explore possible options on dealing with school violence. Also, the Education committee will have a special legislative hearing on youth violence and safety issues on May 19, 1999. Additionally, the legislature is considering several bills focused on school and gun safety. As you know, I have been a strong supporter of commonsense gun control legislation. Enclosed is a list of some measures on these issues.

Please be assured that as a member of the Assembly Education and Public Safety Committees, I am deeply committed to securing the safety of our children at school. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this very important issue.

Sincerely,



JIM CUNNEEN
Assemblymember
24th District

JC:nc

School Safety Legislation

Regular Session

AB 32 (Scott); Prohibits the licensing authority and the Department of Justice from granting any new firearms dealer license or firearms manufacturer license to an applicant whose business premises are located within 1,000 feet of any public or private school. Jim Cunneen cast the deciding vote to pass this measure. Status: In Senate; pending committee assignment.

AB 235 (Kuehl); Creates the California Youth Violence Prevention Authority within the Attorney General's Office. The Authority has duties and responsibilities related to the prevention of youth violence, including the production of a statewide plan for the coordination of violence prevention programs by January 1, 2001. Status: To be considered by Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 661 (Vincent); Present law requires teachers to be notified if one of their pupils has engaged in or is reasonably suspected to have engaged in specified acts that are grounds for suspension or expulsion. This bill requires that notice to be given no matter where the acts occurred, i.e., they do not have to be committed at school or at a school-related event. The bill also requires notice to be delivered in writing to the teacher within 72 hours of the district receiving the information. Status: To be considered by Assembly Education Committee.

AB 1031 (Shelley); Provides funding for youth-to-youth peer programs in public schools. Defines purposes, imposes requirements on participating districts, restricts eligible activities, mandates an increase in administrative personnel, and appropriates \$30 million annually. Status: Past Assembly Education Committee. Status: To be considered by Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 1587 (Scott); This bill would make statewide response teams available to schools that have suffered tragedy or trauma. The teams would include school psychologists, counselors, and mental health professionals as well as law enforcement officers. Status: To be considered by Assembly Public Safety Committee.

SB 15 (Polanco); This bill would effectively ban the manufacture and sale of junk handguns (Saturday Night Specials) in California by instituting minimum safety standards to ensure these firearms do not accidentally discharge when dropped or misfire. Jim Cunneen has supported similar measures in the past. In fact, he cast the deciding vote in support of a similar measure during the last Legislative Session. Status: To be considered by Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 23 (Perata); This bill would ban the manufacture and sale of military-style assault weapons in California. It would close a loophole in the state law that permits a manufacturer to build and sell virtual replicas of assault weapons that are barred under existing state law. Jim Cunneen has supported similar measures in the past. In fact, he cast the deciding vote in support of a similar measure during the last Legislative Session. Status: To be considered by Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 106 (Scott/Aroner); This bill would require all handguns sold in California be equipped with child-safety locks. This measure was approved the Assembly Public Safety Committee with Jim Cunneen's support. Jim Cunneen has supported similar measures in the past. In fact, he cast the deciding vote in support of a similar measure during the last Legislative Session. Status: To be considered by the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Special Session

ABX 20 (Maddox); Provides grants to school districts for more training for school security personnel. Status: Not given consideration in Special Session.

ABX 21 (Zettel and Maddox); Expulsion of students caught with drugs on campus. Status: Not given consideration in Special Session.

ABX 22 (Bob Pacheco); Allows the use of special funds for school security, and allowing school security to patrol within a half-mile of schools (not just on school campuses). Status: Not given consideration in Special Session.

ABX 38 (Dickerson); Increases penalties for violent and serious felonies committed against a teacher or student at or near a school. Increased misdemeanor penalties by six months under the same circumstances. Status: Not given consideration in Special Session.

Pending Legislative Ideas

Locally Targeted Safety Programs (Rod Pacheco); This legislation would earmark a portion of the state funds from the state lottery for local school safety programs. These funds will be distributed on a per capita basis and local school boards will have sole discretion on their distribution after a public meeting.

Violence Prevention Programs (Rod Pacheco); Funds from Proposition 10, now targeted for early childhood development, will be earmarked for research in early identification of "at risk youth". Moreover, model prevention, intervention and violence prevention programs will be developed and implemented based on this research.

Sentence Enhancements (Rod Pacheco); This legislation is designed to target low level violence up to violent felonies against teachers and students. It will increase penalties and mandate jail time for misdemeanors occurring on school grounds and create a sentence enhancement for the commission of violent felonies against students and teachers on campus.

Death Penalty for School Site Murders (Rod Pacheco); This legislation will make it a capital offense to intentionally kill a man, woman, or child on a kindergarten through 12th grade school site. This will be an addition to the list of special circumstances that do not currently provide this protection.

Direct Filing by District Attorneys (Rod Pacheco); For the commission of any murder or school grounds by a juvenile, District Attorney's will have the discretion to bypass juvenile court and file charges directly in adult courts.

Disclosure of Juvenile Records to School Officials (Rod Pacheco); Currently, school officials do not have notice nor access to confidential juvenile records, especially of violence. Consequently, they are unable to take adequate precautions to protect their students. This legislation will allow school officials access to juvenile records so they may have notice of the students with whom they are dealing and may take the necessary safety measures.