

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
“Examining State and Federal Recommendations for Enhancing School
Safety against Targeted Violence”**

**OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GARY C. PETERS
JULY 25, 2019
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing today.

This is an extremely important and difficult conversation. There is no question that schools must be safe places for children to learn and grow. Every single life lost in a school shooting is an unspeakable tragedy.

As adults, and as policy makers, our number one responsibility is to protect our children. We are failing.

I want to recognize the many survivors we have with us today, especially Mr. Schachter and Mr. Hoyer who are joining us as witnesses.

Thank you for your courage and your action.

I cannot even begin to grasp the incomprehensible pain of losing a child to gun violence. But I know that I must – that we must – honor the memory of those who are no longer with us by taking action to stop these preventable tragedies.

I am grateful to you both, to Sheriff Gualtieri and to Dr. Temkin, for helping the Committee better understand how we can protect children in our schools and work towards ensuring that no other families have to endure losing a loved one to this senseless form of violence.

Strengthening safety in our schools is not a partisan issue. And I look forward to a productive discussion on the actions we can take to make school campuses more secure, improve first responders’ capabilities in an emergency, and, most importantly, stop these shootings before they happen.

Today’s conversation will be about solutions. And we want to leave here with a clear roadmap for addressing this problem. But we cannot forget exactly who we are doing this for.

For Alex. For Luke. For the hundreds of children killed or injured in their schools. For the families, students, teachers, and staff whose worlds have been irrevocably changed by this violence. And for the millions of students who will be entering classrooms this fall.

Thank you all for being here. I look forward to your testimony and our discussion.