

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act

Florida recently enacted the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act. Several provisions of the Act, if not implemented with care, could lead to hostile and potentially dangerous school environments and increased discrimination, in probable violation of federal laws, against students of color. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. sent a letter to Florida's sheriffs, superintendents, and school boards urging them not to send armed civilians into schools and implement the Act in a manner that complies with federal anti-discrimination laws and is calculated to prevent unintended, adverse effects on students, educators, and communities. You may find the letter [here](#).

This sheet provides an overview of the Act and what you can do to make sure it is carefully implemented in a manner that protects students and educators and complies with federal civil rights laws.

What Does the Act Do?

Supports positive school climates by:

- Expanding mental health supports for students;
- Creating a three-day waiting period between the purchase and delivery of a firearm;
- Restricting gun purchases to those over 21; and
- Prohibiting bump-fire stocks.

Endangers positive school climates by:

- Allowing school employees, including some teachers, to carry guns;
- Requiring the placement of armed personnel in every school;
- Requiring educators to “consult with” law enforcement whenever a student commits more than one misdemeanor or “exhibits a pattern of behavior . . . that would pose a threat to school safety;” and
- Creating an anonymous reporting mechanism without proper due process protections.

What Can You Do?

Please encourage your sheriffs, school boards, and superintendents to:

- Refuse to arm school staff;
- Adopt policies that limit the role of school resource officers so that they do not supplant the role of educators in addressing typical student misbehavior;
- Collect & publicly share data, disaggregated by race, on referrals to law enforcement, school-based arrests, searches, the use of force, and the filing of criminal complaints so that officials & the community can identify & address problems;
- Use the consultation with law enforcement as a prompt to consider evidence-based alternatives to a law enforcement referral or arrest, including programs like Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) or trauma-informed care;
- Ensure that the anonymous reporting system is housed within a system of trust amongst students and staff, that there are proper due process protections, and that reports are tracked, disaggregated, and assessed for racial disparities; and
- Promote a safe and secure school environment by meeting students' emotional and academic needs and fostering a culture of trust and respect.

For more information, please contact Nicole Dooley or Michael N. Turnage Young at 202-682-1300.

This factsheet is a resource, not legal advice. It is provided for informational purposes only and not as a substitute for or supplement to the legal advice necessary to address the specific concerns of any individual. Moreover, the relevant laws may be revised after the publication of this factsheet. Therefore, it is your responsibility to determine how all applicable laws affect you.