



NICOLE R. GALLOWAY, CPA
Missouri State Auditor

August 20, 2019

Governor Michael L. Parson
Office of the Governor
201 W. Capitol Avenue, Room 216
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear Governor Parson:

For Missouri families, school safety is often at the top of their mind. As a parent to three young children, I understand the angst one feels each time another story breaks about a school shooting. As a father and grandfather I know you share these concerns. We need to get beyond angst and concern, and do more than offer thoughts and prayers to victims and family members left behind. We have to act.

A growing number of Missourians I talk with, whether at the grocery store or at my sons' baseball games, are troubled by the prevalence of school shootings. It is hard to accept as normal the harsh realities that Missouri kids face every day -- participating in active shooter drills or knowing how to properly use a bullet-resistant backpack as a shield.

The recent report by your School Safety Task Force provides important findings and bipartisan recommendations that require immediate action. Specifically, I join Lt. Gov. Kehoe and task force members in recommending that all Missouri schools should have an armed and commissioned school resource officer. School resource officers are sworn career law enforcement officers who already receive specialized training and certification under Missouri law. As the report indicates, school resource officers are present in many of Missouri's schools, but not all.

It should be a top priority for state government to ensure *every* school has an experienced, properly trained school resource officer who is prepared to neutralize a threat and respond to emergency situations. Currently, Missouri does not fund school resource officer programs in individual school districts. Instead, the cost is completely borne by local school districts or jointly with police and sheriffs' departments. This must change, and you have the power to change it.

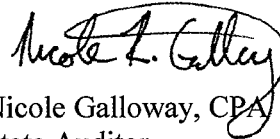
To that end, I request you call a special legislative session, concurrent with the upcoming veto session, to require school resource officers in every Missouri school and to provide state funding for these critical first responders.

We are forced to take such action now because for too long state and federal officials have failed to adopt common sense gun safety measures, including universal background checks, closing the gun show loophole, preventing suspected terrorists from purchasing firearms, and implementing red flag laws. These same leaders have failed to provide meaningful resources and improvements to our mental health systems, and instead have enacted misguided policies like arming our teachers.

Teachers should educate our students, law enforcement should protect our children, and lawmakers should act instead of sitting idly by while our kids are put in danger.

I am ready to work with you to determine sources of funding for this initiative that do not raise taxes. Many of my office's audit reports already contain cost-saving recommendations for state government agencies and programs. Surely, we can agree that protecting Missouri's students must be a top priority for lawmakers and outweighs any challenges that emerge from identifying sources of funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole L. Galloway". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Nicole Galloway, CPA
State Auditor

c: Lieutenant Governor Mike Kehoe