



Rhode Island General Assembly

Office of the House Minority Leader

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minority Leader Patricia Morgan Continues to Demand AG Release Google Funds for School Safety

Time to Prioritize Our Children's Safety

Every School Could Receive \$75,000 for Security Upgrades

STATE HOUSE -- House Minority Leader Patricia Morgan (R-District 26 Coventry, Warwick, W. Warwick) continues to call on the Rhode Island Office of Attorney General to release nearly \$23 million in Google settlement funds to upgrade security in Rhode Island schools.

“The Office of Attorney General was given \$60 million in 2012 as part of the \$230 million Google settlement for law enforcement purposes,” said Leader Morgan. “Since then, the office has spent nearly two thirds of the money on purchases that are much less important than our children and teachers’ safety, including high-end tablets and accessories, lapel pins, generator rentals, and a new \$15 million ‘customer support center’ in Cranston.”

The state budget office estimates that about \$23 million from the settlement funds has not been committed to future projects.

“The remaining \$23 million should be given to our schools for security upgrades. I have been calling on the Attorney General’s Office to contribute these funds since February and have received nothing but hostile stonewalling.”

“The Attorney General’s Office first attempted to charge me over \$3,700 for documents detailing expenditures made with the settlement money. Under state law, as Minority Leader and member of the House finance committee, the Attorney General’s office is required to provide me with documents without a fee. I sent a letter detailing the law and their legal obligation almost four weeks ago on March 28th, and they have been unresponsive. It is disturbing that our chief law officer has such a callous disregard for his own responsibility to uphold the law.

“Governor Raimondo has provided him with support, labeling the remaining funds ‘a drop in the bucket’. That’s hypocritical. I believe every school committee would welcome their share of the money to upgrade security at their schools. Dividing the remaining \$23 million among our 306



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public schools, provides each with \$75,000. That will go a long way to keeping our children safe. It is a practical and essential step in preventing future tragedies,” said Leader Morgan.

“Each school faces a unique set of challenges when it comes to school security. After speaking to school officials throughout Rhode Island, the districts will clearly benefit from additional funding for security upgrades. Being able to install automatic locks, bulletproof glass, or even active shooter detection systems would ensure our children are safe during the school day. The Attorney General must relinquish his pot of gold to protect our children.”

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