

Chairman Becker, Ranking Member Miller, and other members of the Federalism Committee. It is my privilege to present testimony today opposing HB 178.

My name is Dr. Mary Dixon and I am a retired school psychologist. I live in Gahanna, Ohio. I worked in public and parochial schools for over 30 years. As a school psychologist, I both assessed children and counseled them. I also worked closely with teachers and parents, often listening to their concerns.

As you know, proposed HB 178 would allow concealed carry of a gun without a license and thus without mandatory gun safety training. I have heard members of the NRA, an accomplished marine, a representative of the Fraternal Order of Police, and several concerned citizens testify in opposition to this bill. However, I have not heard anyone address the issue from a school point of view.

Currently there is discussion about training and arming teachers in schools. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) opposes arming teachers. Their statement paper written on February 22, 2018 states, "Doing so places an unrealistic, unreasonable burden on America's educators, has the potential to cause more harm from unintentional or inaccurate discharge of firearms and can undermine the sense of safe, supportive learning environments." The American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the National PTA, the American Medical Association, the Major Chiefs Association, and the National Association of School Resource Officers also oppose allowing guns in schools. These concerns are presented with full knowledge that the teachers would receive training before they would be armed.

The statement paper continues by stating that NASP also believes ". . . that possession of a firearm should be limited only to commissioned trained school resource officers." The NASP statement draws from the National School Resource Officers who cite concerns by stating, ". . . risks are that an individual with a gun but not a uniform could be mistaken for the shooter, firearm skills degrade quickly and require constant practice under high stress conditions, being able to shoot a gun does not mean an individual is psychologically equipped to shoot another person, and discharging a firearm in a crowded school setting is extremely risky." In addition, as with their parents' firearms, students may be aware of where and how teachers keep their firearms and how to obtain access. (I can personally attest to students having access as I had money taken from my purse 3 times in my 30-year career despite having thought I secured it.)

A national guide published by the federal government's chief legal law enforcement, public health, education, and emergency management agencies cautioned that ***allowing civilians to carry guns in schools is not a sound security practice.*** The President and Executive Director of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, which represents 75 police forces from large cities in the USA and Canada say, "The more guns that are coming into the equation, the more volatility and the more risk there is of somebody getting hurt." The FBI found that in 250 active shooter incidents, there were only seven successful armed civilian interventions. In contrast, unarmed civilians successfully intervened in 22 incidents. In fact, armed civilians have put law enforcement in danger, delayed law enforcement responses, and posed a risk to innocent bystanders during active shooter crises.

Why am I citing concerns about arming teachers when HB 178 deals with concealed carry without a license? Because schools are microcosms of our society. If the various professional groups cited above are concerned with teachers TRAINED in gun use being a safety concern wouldn't the same concerns apply to those using concealed carry without a license and without training? Further this does not even

address the issue of parents who become upset with how school personnel are dealing with their child. It is possible that they might be one of those concealed carry without a license or training persons and might be standing outside a school waiting for school personnel. Now we have two or more people with guns around children. Our children are our most precious asset. Shouldn't we be more protective of them?

NASP concluded their statement by saying, "Our nations must focus on the approaches that genuinely safeguard the well-being of our children and the school staff who work to educate, empower, and protect them every day." I do not think that HB 178 would do this.