

Testimony on Senate Bill 317  
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:  
Sara DeMuch

Chair Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to SB 317.

As an Ohio public school teacher, this is a difficult time with many unknowns as we work to return to school safely during a pandemic. While reading school district plans and listening to the concerns of my students' families, I was shocked to learn that a hearing and possible vote was scheduled for SB 317. This bill would drastically reduce the training requirements for teachers who are armed within our school buildings. There is no data or research that supports arming teachers as a way to keep our students safe in school. Passing a bill in the middle of a pandemic that would reduce or eliminate training requirements for armed teachers would put our students at risk.

Under current Ohio law, all armed school employees must either complete peace officer training or have 20 years of active duty as an officer. SB 317 would allow school districts to exempt teachers from this training. It would let individual districts decide that teachers can carry firearms with as little as 8 hours of concealed carry training (6 of which can be completed online.) It would even allow no training at all if firearms are not concealed when carried.

Schools are a place of learning where students need to feel safe and respected. As a teacher, I am required to make decisions in my classroom that are research based. I am asking that this committee do the same when making decisions that impact my job and the safety of our students and teachers. According to data, 91% of active school shooters were current or former students. The U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence (2019), found that in 100% of school violence cases there were behavioral warning signs ahead of time. This data supports threat assessment teams and Red Flag laws where we can intervene early and provide our students the support they need. Nowhere is there any research that supports arming teachers let alone reducing training requirements.

[\(https://everytownresearch.org/documents/2019/02/keeping-our-schools-safe.pdf/\)](https://everytownresearch.org/documents/2019/02/keeping-our-schools-safe.pdf/)

As an Ohio resident, voter, parent, and teacher, I urge you to put our students and teachers first and not move forward with this bill.

Respectfully,  
Sara DeMuch  
Moreland Hills, OH