

Testimony on SB 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by
Ariel Miller

Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig, and Members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committees,

Thank you for letting me submit this written testimony to you today in opposition to SB 317. My name is Ariel Miller. I am writing on behalf of my little granddaughters – one seven, and one ten years old - who are students in the Forest Hills District, Anderson Township. I want them to be safe in school. By putting guns in the hands of people with virtually no required training, this bill would do the opposite: increase their risk of dying from gunshots.

As facilities chair (Junior Warden) of my parish in Wyoming, Ohio two years ago, I was responsible for developing active shooter protocols, including trying to find ways to protect our preschool and Sunday School children. I attended a briefing by Wyoming's police chief, who told us it is extremely difficult to shoot accurately when the target is moving, even if a person is a trained police officer.

This bill poses unacceptable risks to children and school staff. They could be struck by shots intended for the perpetrator. A school staff member who feels threatened and who reacts from a fright or flight impulse could shoot a student during a perceived confrontation.

As part of the Becoming Beloved Community Leadership Team of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio, **I am keenly aware of data on the disproportionate rate at which Black students are treated as severe discipline problems in U.S. schools. This suggests that students of color are put at greatest risk by arming minimally-trained teachers or staff.** SB 317 terrifies many of my Black friends with children or grandchildren in Ohio schools.

I can't imagine that any parent would want a person with only 8 hours of training to serve as a school nurse. Why would you consider putting barely-trained people in charge of a lethal weapon?

Current Ohio law requires extensive peace officer training for armed staff in schools. Don't change that. Please, please, drop this bill and focus instead on proposals that will truly increase the safety of our children, teachers, and school staff.

Thank you for reading my testimony. I ask God to bless and guide you in your important work.

Sincerely,
Ariel Miller

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