

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Submitted by: Andrea Kovesdi

Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Senator William P. Coley, II, Chair

Senator Matt Huffman, Vice Chair

Senator Hearcel F. Craig, Ranking Member

Chairman Coley, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Craig and members of the committee thank you for allowing my written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 317. My name is Andrea Kovesdi and I am writing to you today as a mother of two young adults and a concerned lifelong Ohioan.

I was a first time mother in April 1999. When I sat down with my four week old son and turned on the television, I saw the horror that was the Columbine High School massacre. My jaw dropped as I stared at the screen and hugged my baby son closer to me. The first thought that went through my head was that I would have to home school him when the time came. I did not and we have now realized our fortune that his school did not have a shooting in the years that he attended.

However, there were 24 moms on April 20, 1999, that experienced unimaginable pain and grief and will for the rest of their lives. As I said, I thought I would have to home school Andrew but a thought that never crossed my mind that day was, "It's too bad that those teachers weren't armed."

Not only do armed teachers increase the risk of gun violence in schools, they create other problems for school districts such as increased insurance premiums or loss of insurance altogether. This has happened in Kansas, Indiana and Oregon. Our schools are facing budget deficits already and preparing to return children to school during a pandemic will be no easy task without adding the liability involving armed teachers.

Proponents claim that this bill would allow local school boards to keep their children safe. However, having more guns on school grounds will, in fact, make schools a more dangerous place for our children and their teachers. A number of times guns have been discharged unintentionally on school grounds by teachers and staff. Guns have also been misplaced or stolen and ended up in a student's hands.

There are bills that have been introduced in this Senate that would help to prevent more gun violence in our state. SB183 which would require background checks on firearms transfers is supported by an overwhelming majority of Ohioans. SB184 would implement an Extreme Risk Law in order to protect people in crisis from harming themselves or others. These are bills that will make Ohio a safer place. SB 317 will not.

Thank you for your time.