

Testimony on Senate Bill 317  
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:  
Cheryl Gooch

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. I am a proud Ohio voter who loves my state, and wants our state to be exemplary to other states in how we take care of our citizens. I am in complete opposition to your Senate Bill 317 to arm teachers in our schools with only 8 hours concealed carry training.

I realize that your impetus like many lawmakers in Ohio and around the country is primarily driven by who is giving you the money to put forth bills. However, I urge you to think carefully about the impact this bill will have on the children in our Ohio schools. The research is VERY clear that arming teachers is a dangerous approach to stopping gun violence in schools. Allowing teachers to carry guns in schools is at great risk to our students safety. Good teachers are at school to educate students, not to be school safety officers. Shame on you, for expecting teachers to be safety officers, when they are not trained to do this. Shame on you for not putting forth bills to enhance funding to schools so that they can access the proactive supports that their students at risk and in crisis need.

Additionally, to propose SB317 that supports arming teachers with the least amount of training possible clearly shows that you don't value the extensive training that our law enforcement officers in all Ohio counties and cities have to go through to handle guns safely in dangerous situations. Perhaps you don't realize that a gun in the hands of a person who is not stable, is a "DANGEROUS situation!"

I personally know of families in my community whose lives have been forever changed by gun violence, either due to suicide or homicide. These families are forever scared. Think back to the teachers in your life time in elementary, middle and high school, what would they say to you? I believe 99% of them would say, "No way, I'm here to teach, not to handle a gun." The teachers who respond differently, should re-examine their career choice.

So, my hope is that you will listen to the constituents of Ohio, and not to the gun lobby and their financial backers. We don't need bills that exempt school systems from supporting all our children and teachers in an equitable and safe manner. Propose bills that will truly address the root causes of gun violence. I don't know if you've read the book *Columbine*, but it is important that every lawmaker in the country read this book and speak to survivors of the many school gun shootings. You might think twice of

accepting donations from the gun lobbies, or at least consider holding them accountable for their ambivalence toward these shootings. Please vote no on SB 317.