

Dear Ohio Senator Coley,

My name is Todd Sautters and I currently live in Columbus, OH, and I teach social studies at Canal Winchester High School. I am an Ohio resident and voter. I am writing to you to discontinue hearings on Senate Bill (SB) 317, because I am strongly against the changes it can bring to our schools.

SB 317 would allow teachers to carry loaded guns in Ohio elementary, middle, and high schools without completing the safety training required by current Ohio law.

Under current state law, all armed school employees—including teachers, security guards, and special police—must either complete an approved basic peace officer training course, or have completed 20 years of active duty as a peace officer. Basic peace officer training is regulated by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission, and comprises approximately 728 hours of instruction.

But SB 317 would exempt teachers from this requirement, and allow school districts to employ armed personnel in schools with as little as 8 hours of concealed carry training (6 of which can be completed online)—or with no training at all, if firearms are not concealed when carried.

We need our students to learn in a safe environment. As a high school teacher in Canal Winchester, OH, I am confident the effects of this bill will lead to more dangerous schools. Every gun found within a school makes it more dangerous. A dangerous school setting will not result in optimized student learning.

In the many hours of training I have completed to become a certified teacher in the state of Ohio, and the continued training, we are told that a child must feel safe in order to maximize their ability to learn. Maslow's hierarchy of needs tells us that a student's most basic needs must be met before they can be self-actualized. Before learning must occur basic needs, like the guarantee of safety, must be met. As a result, any addition of guns in schools will negatively impact student learning.

A student in a classroom in which the teacher possesses a firearm is not a safe classroom. We need less guns in school, not more.

As a result, I strongly encourage you to discontinue hearings on Senate Bill 317.

Thank you for your time.

Todd Sautters
Social Studies Teacher
Canal Winchester High School