

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Patricia Krummrich

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.

My name is Pat Krummrich and I strongly oppose SB 317.

I have been an Ohio resident for 23 years. In return for paying thousands of dollars in Ohio property taxes over the years, I expect that the teachers and staff who care for my children at school meet appropriate state educational and proficiency standards. I wouldn't put my child on a school bus with an untrained driver. I wouldn't allow a school nurse to operate on my child because he/she is not a state licensed physician. I would not agree to my child's primary teacher not having an Ohio Teaching license. So why would I want my child to be in a classroom with an adult who is carrying a gun but has little to no firearm training. But if this, frankly, ridiculous bill passes, that is exactly what my district could decide to do. And some districts do not disclose it to parents if they decide to arm staff. They want it to be like a Sky Marshall, a surprise. The presence of a gun in the home makes it 5 times more likely that a family member will be shot. It's not surprising then that the presence of guns in school, especially in untrained hands, also raises the risk of a child being shot in school. So we are forced to blindly send our children to school, worrying more about the gun that may discharge in their own classroom than about a mass shooting.

This bill would give school districts the option to arm teachers with little to no firearm training, even while School Peace Officers would continue to be (rightly) required to have 700+ hours of training or 20 years experience. As a parent, I can understand that some districts may choose to have a thoroughly trained school peace officer as part of their safety plan along with a restricted number of entry ways, etc. At least under current law, we know that if an adult is armed in the school, they have had extensive weapons and crisis response training. Why would anyone believe that a math teacher, coach or school custodian would magically be better equipped than a police officer to handle a deadly weapon around crowds of children and should be therefore allowed to do so with no training?

I was a substitute teacher in multiple school districts in the Canton area before I began my career as a (State Licensed) Medical SpeechPathologist at Akron Children's Hospital. I raised 2 daughters who attended Jackson Massillon Schools and I coached High School girl's volleyball. So I look at this issue from multiple perspectives; as a teacher, parent, coach and health care provider. Teaching is an extremely challenging job where staff must keep track of the actions of 20 to 30 children at one time. It is a physically active job; Teachers move about the classroom in close proximity to students, hand out papers, escort classes through crowded halls, come to the rescue of

an injured child and sometimes even break up disturbances. Putting a gun in the hands of a teacher or staff member without thorough training is both unfair to the teachers and dangerous to both children and staff. It also raises the risk of escalation of violence or personal bias.

Giffords.org has found and verified more than 90 publicly reported incidents of mishandled guns at schools in the last five years, including instances where teachers/staff accidentally discharged their guns, sometimes injuring themselves or children, or have allowed their gun to fall into the hands of a student.

Here's just a sample of such incidents:

1. **TWO INCIDENTS ON THE SAME DAY!** On March 17, 2018, a math and criminal justice teacher in Seaside, California, who also serves as a reserve police officer, accidentally fired a gun inside a classroom while teaching a course on public safety, injuring three students. One 17 year old boy got a bullet fragment lodged in his neck.
2. On the same day, a school resource officer in Virginia accidentally discharged his firearm while sitting down in his office.
3. Two days after the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, a sheriff's deputy accidentally shot himself in the leg while responding to an inaccurate report of shots fired at a nearby private school.
4. On Feb. 5, 2018, in Maplewood, Minnesota, a school liaison officer was talking to a group of young kids, when a third-grader got hold of his holstered gun and pulled the trigger, firing a shot. Fortunately, nobody was hurt.
5. In September, 2014, at an elementary school in Utah (where teachers are permitted to carry concealed weapons), a teacher accidentally discharged her gun in a school bathroom. Fragments of the bullet and porcelain toilet pierced her leg.
5. A substitute teacher's loaded gun fell out of his waistband on the Elementary School playground in Largo, Calif. when he demonstrated a cartwheel in Oct. 2018.
6. January 16, 2020 — A school resource officer left a firearm in the bathroom, where it was found by a student. No shots fired.
7. In August, 2019, in Columbus, Ohio, The school's Transportation Director, who was part of the district's concealed carry program left her pistol in an unlocked case near her desk when she left to go to the restroom. Two first graders accessed the gun.

Senators, you can easily go to Gifford.org "**Every Incident of Mishandled Guns in Schools**" to see a full list of the rest of the 90 incidents of teachers and staff mishandling guns in schools.

As a pediatric health care provider, I've seen the damage gun wounds inflict on children. As a bereaved mother, I know the pain of losing a 15 year old child. If the state abdicates its responsibility to protect our children on this issue, it will provide cover for Ohio school districts to choose the cheapest path, arming teachers with minimal to no training. Districts will be able to brush off parent's fears by saying, "Our safety policy meets state standards", which will be no standard at all.

Please know that Ohio voters will fight tooth and nail against SB 317.

Sincerely,
Pat Krummrich
330-495-8788
pak51lwl@gmail.com