

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Kathleen McGorray

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 lifelong Ohio resident and a proud educator. I served Ohio students and families in public schools for 40 years, including 25 years as an elementary school principal. As a teacher and a principal, my first responsibility was always to ensure the safety and security of my students. For that reason, I very strongly oppose SB317.

It is inconceivable to me - and to every educator I know - to consider REDUCING safety training requirements for teachers carrying guns inside schools! As a principal responsible for hundreds of students and dozens of teachers and staff, as well as for parents, volunteers, and visitors, my daily duty was to MINIMIZE risk and ensure safety. Bringing guns into schools in the hands of poorly trained individuals would certainly THREATEN school safety and DECREASE school security.

Teachers conduct tens of thousands of personal interactions every moment of every day. They are masters of multi-tasking, highly trained to promote the academic and emotional growth of their precious students. Teachers make multiple decisions and interactions simultaneously, all day, every day.

But a teacher's full-time attention is devoted to student safety and to academic and emotional growth. There is absolutely no room for a teacher to take on additional interactions involving a handgun - certainly not without extensive training! I would never want a teacher under my supervision to have a handgun at school - and I cannot contemplate the idea of allowing insufficiently trained teachers to carry guns!

Research clearly shows that introducing more guns in schools increases the risk of gun violence and that civilians with guns is not a sound school security practice.

As a career educator and school principal, and a PhD in Urban Education, I join the majority of Ohio educators in strongly opposing SB317. Please vote NO on SB 317.

Sincerely,
Kathleen McGorray