

Testimony on Senate Bill 317  
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:  
Debora Avery

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 Debora Avery. I am an Ohio resident, a voter, and a military veteran. Most importantly, I am a teacher and I am deeply troubled by Senate Bill 317.

The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association both oppose allowing guns in schools. As a teacher, my focus is always on the education of my students. This is an unbelievably complicated process, with absolutely no room for distraction, especially if that distraction is a loaded handgun.

Many of my students have personally experienced gun violence. A 3rd grader of mine saw her older sister shot and killed on the front porch of their house. Just this March, one of my 5th graders called me to let me know that her father had been murdered. He may be just a gun violence statistic to you, but he was everything to her. These children deserve a safe place to learn and grow, not a building where they have to worry whether their teacher has a loaded handgun or not.

Introducing more guns in schools increases the risk of gun violence. They can be misplaced or stolen. Most teachers don't even have a place to safely lock their personal belongings, much less a loaded gun. Where are these handguns going to be kept during the school day? Would it be an open carry where any student could access it? Teachers rely on proximity for classroom management and individual instruction. Shoulder to shoulder, elbow to elbow, close enough for a student to reach out and easily unholster a handgun.

As a military veteran, I spent hours training on how to care for and safely fire my weapon. To allow someone to carry a loaded gun into a school with only eight hours of training (some of which can be completed online) is the epitome of irresponsibility.

Please oppose SB 317. No amount of training makes it safe for a teacher to carry a gun in a school.

Respectfully submitted,

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