

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Denise Trudeau

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, the bill that would reduce training requirements for armed teachers. I am an Ohio resident and a voter. I taught for 35 years, and was involved in numerous active shooter drills. Arming teachers would be dangerous. Arming teachers with little or no training would be even more dangerous.

I offer another reason for not arming teachers - it wouldn't work. The gun must be stored safely, separate from the ammunition. Where would they be stored to be safe but accessible at the same time? How would the teacher get to it quickly enough? How do you make sure the teacher with the gun is where you would need them to be when they need to be there? What do you do about schools that have no armed teachers?

If a shooter came into a school, teachers would first have to shepherd their students into the safest spot in the room and keep them quiet. Do they just wait to see if the shooter comes to their room or do they go looking for him, leaving their students alone? If they encounter him, will they actually be able to shoot? Will they hit him? Can they go up against the semiautomatic weapons he likely has? Will they shoot the wrong person? How do they convince any law enforcement they run into that they themselves are not the shooter? What are the chances someone with little or no training would survive, much less defend others, in a situation like this?

These are questions that come into my mind when I try to imagine how arming teachers would play out. I don't know if those who support arming teachers think that a school shooter situation would be like a movie or video game, but my years in a variety of school settings and lock down drills has taught me it would not.

Preventing gun violence would be a more effective way to make schools safer. Making the school buildings themselves more secure, passing stronger gun safety laws to keep guns out of the shooters' hands, hiring more school counselors and training teachers to identify and intervene with students who show signs of posing a risk would all be better approaches to improve school safety

Please vote against SB 317. There are other, better ways to keep our kids safe.

Denise Trudeau