

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Mary Dixon

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 an Ohio resident and a retired school psychologist. I strongly urge you to reject Ohio SB 317.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) opposes arming teachers. Their statement paper written on February 22, 2018 states, "Doing so places an unrealistic, unreasonable burden on America's educators, has the potential to cause more harm from unintentional or inaccurate discharge of firearms and can undermine the sense of safe, supportive learning environments." The American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the National PTA, the American Medical Association, the Major Chiefs Association, and the National Association of School Resource Officers also oppose allowing guns in schools. These concerns are presented with full knowledge that the teachers would receive training before they would be armed.

The NASP statement draws from the National School Resource Officers who cite concerns by stating, ". . . risks are that an individual with a gun but not a uniform could be mistaken for the shooter, firearm skills degrade quickly and require constant practice under high stress conditions, being able to shoot a gun does not mean an individual is psychologically equipped to shoot another person, and discharging a firearm in a crowded school setting is extremely risky."

A national guide published by the federal government's chief legal law enforcement, public health, education, and emergency management agencies cautioned that allowing civilians to carry guns in schools is not a sound security practice. The President and Executive Director of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, which represents 75 police forces from large cities in the USA and Canada says, "The more guns that are coming into the equation, the more volatility and the more risk there is of somebody getting hurt." The FBI found that in 250 active shooter incidents, there were only seven successful armed civilian interventions. In contrast, unarmed civilians successfully intervened in 22 incidents. In fact, armed civilians have put law enforcement in danger,

delayed law enforcement responses, and posed a risk to innocent bystanders during an active shooter crisis.

This bill matters to me because I believe there have been enough school shootings that have traumatized, injured and sometimes killed students. The passage of SB 317 would increase the likelihood that these shootings would INCREASE, not decrease.

Please, please, please vote against SB 317.

Mary Dixon