

GOVERNMENT
OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 7/20/2020

Name: Cameron Smith

Address: 6852 Olde Greenbrier Ln

Dayton OH 45459

Telephone:

1-513-344-5430

Organization Representing: Students Demand Action

Testifying on Bill Number: 317

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: _____ Service Dog _____

Written testimony is a public record and may be posted on the Ohio Senate's website

My name is Cameron Smith, I am a member of Students Demand Action, Thank you for allowing me to testify against SB 317, a bill that eliminates training requirements for teachers or school staff authorized to carry guns in schools.

On February 29th, 2016 I was eating lunch in the Madison high school cafeteria when a classmate who had picked up a loaded gun from his grandmother's home opened fired, shooting me multiple times. Also shot was Cooper Cafrey . The shooter's gun jammed, and he fled the cafeteria. If that had not occurred or if multiple people had returned fire, there could have been more injury to those who were present. There was an armed resource officer on sight who was only seconds away. However, the shooting occurred so quickly the armed resource officer's presence did not deter my shooter. Before the armed resource officer could engage the active shooter two of us were shot three times.

I, of all people, understand that school security is of great importance and how important it is to have well trained security personnel in schools. After the shooting in which I and another student were injured, the Madison School Board decided to arm teachers. When parents and students in the community found out that the School Board was going to arm teachers, we, as concerned members of the community, had many questions we wanted them to answer. The School Board, however, was very resistant to hearing concerns or answering questions.

One student who was shot participated in a peaceful protest regarding the gun violence they encountered. The School Board President told that student that he should apologize for protesting, another board member made a comment that students did not have any first amendment rights. The School Board also gave out personal information of parents who opposed their decision to dangerous people. These dangerous people then harassed the concerned parents who were trying to get answers to their questions from the School Board.

Our questioning of the School Board led us to discover that the teachers who were armed were only given the FASTER training program provided by Buckeye Firearms. A training which requires only 26 hours of training, two of which are at a gun range. The FASTER training is well below the required 700+ hours of peace-officer training that the law requires. I was also appalled to find out that one of the armed teachers had failed his shooting accuracy twice and only passed on his third attempt. How many chances does a person get to pass firearm shooting accuracy before they can carry a gun in a school? It should be one and if you don't pass you are done.

I tried to speak up about it and I and my grandmother who recently passed away were both ostracized and harassed by members in the community. When others tried to speak up, they too were also ostracized and harassed by the Madison township community. We later found out that the ringleaders of the harassment were none other than the School Board members.

School Board members such as those on the Madison School Board, are not the kind of people we should be leaving in charge of critical decision like whether to arm teachers. They made a bad decision – a.) to arm teachers; and b.) they were unwilling to be transparent about their decision when asked; and c.) they harassed community members when they were questioned; and d.) they required minimal training which was well below the legal amount of training required for school staff going armed on duty. They broke the law and they lied about it. Period.

Senate Bill 317 gives local School Boards like the Madison School Board cadre blanche to decide if there are any training requirements for school staff to carry firearms into a sensitive place like a school. As a school shooting survivor, I can tell you this does not make any sense, nor does it make me feel safe. I respectfully ask that you vote no on SB 317 and let the 12th District Court of Appeals ruling stand until you can speak with the experts in School Safety to truly learn what meaningful steps need to be taken to actually keep students safe so they do not have to experience what I have already had to experience. Please do not pass SB 317.