

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Mollie Eardley

Chariman Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to SB317. I write to you as a concerned citizen and a mom of three.

As the mother of three children who have no recollection of a time when schools did not perform lock down drills, I urge you to not add to their ingrained fears about school safety. SB317 will make our schools less safe, by increasing the chance of firearms being misused or accessed by the wrong individuals.

I send my kids to school so they can learn, thrive and become responsible members of society, not to learn how to cower and hide because our legislators refuse to enact laws that will help protect them. Laws like safe storage requirements, or red flag laws could prevent individuals showing warning signs from accessing a gun and could help prevent guns from entering our schools while in the wrong hands. A law like SB317 would do the opposite. Allowing untrained individuals to carry weapons will increase the chance of those weapons landing in the wrong hands. We do not want to create additional access points for those who may intend to do harm to themselves or others. Nor do we want to create increased opportunities for unintentional shootings. Both options become more likely, not less with SB317. In short, this bill will decrease school safety.

Before allowing teachers who are not sufficiently trained to handle weapons, please think about the level of trust (or lack thereof) that we currently place in our teachers. Teachers attend years of school to learn to teach. Yet, we still impose restrictions in the form of standardized tests and core curriculum. If we feel they need oversight for the very task for which they are trained, why would we want them to perform dangerous tasks for which they are not sufficiently trained?

With the advent of the Covid-19 virus, schools are working around the clock to determine how to best educate our students while maintaining their safety. This is where we should be focusing. Introducing a bill that will make our schools less safe during this time demonstrates a lack of concern for our educational communities. We need to be focused on ways to keep our children safe, not introducing new safety hazards.

Please let my kids' teachers focus on teaching. It's what they are trained to do. For the safety of students and their teachers, do not allow untrained individuals to carry weapons in our schools. Because I value the safety and well being of my school communities, I adamantly oppose SB317.

Sincerely,
Mollie Eardley