

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Linda Taylor

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.

We can agree about the importance of the safety of our children in schools. I am a resident of Ohio, and a citizen very interested in this topic.

Your recent introduction of SB 317 confounds me. When safety of children is on the line, why on earth would we allow reduced training for those carrying firearms on school property? I do not support the carrying of loaded firearms by teachers, but if anyone on school property is doing so, I want them to be skilled at a high level. Otherwise, the very thing for which we are striving for, safety, is compromised by the amateurish requirements that are dumbed down by your proposal.

School districts should be able to have armed security on premises if they deem that necessary. They should not get to decide on any level of training for them. Those carrying weapons that are capable of killing, should be skilled exactly as we expect peace officers to be skilled, because that's exactly who these people are, peace officers. They should be required to have successfully completed the Ohio Peace Officer Training program. Period. To require less is a dereliction of duty on the part of Ohio to keep its citizens safe, especially our youngest and vulnerable citizens.

I believe SB 317 is irresponsible and endangering. The two largest teacher's organizations are against allowing guns in schools. The federal government's education, public health, chief legal, law enforcement and emergency management agencies all agree that citizens carrying loaded guns in schools is not an effective and safe practice.

Measures that will positively impact safety at schools include extreme risk laws (active shooters are predominantly former and current students with behavioral warning signs), secure gun storage requirements (most school shooters have obtained firearms from family and friends), background checks on all gun purchases and raising the age to purchase semi-automatic firearms to 21. I commit to supporting any efforts you put forth to pass these types of measures.

I implore you to retract this bill and maintain the standards high for the carrying of firearms on school property. Our children deserve best practices to keep them safe, and SB 317 is an unconscionable reduction in standards.

Respectfully yours,

Sincerely,
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