

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Susanne Lane

Chair Coley, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to SB 317. I am writing to you today as a first grade teacher for 23 years who daily uses research and facts to govern my decisions in the classroom. I oppose this bill because the facts show that arming our teachers is not only unpopular, but also doesn't make children safer; in fact, it makes all of us less safe. Below I lay out the myth and the facts.

Myth – Schools need armed staff to respond to school shootings.

Fact- Studies have shown that guns do not protect those who have them from being shot.

(Charles C. Branas, et al., "Investigating the Link Between Gun Possession and Gun Assault," American Journal of Public Health 99, no. 11 (2009): 2034–2040.)

Fact- A study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health in June of 2019 "found no evidence that the presence of resource officers in schools lessened the severity of school shooting incidents."

Fact- Individuals successfully defend themselves with a gun in less than 1% of crimes. (David Hemenway and Sara J. Solnick, "The Epidemiology of Self-defense Gun Use: Evidence from the National Crime Victimization Surveys 2007–2011," Preventive Medicine 79 (2015): 22–27.)

Fact- The risks associated with gun access vastly outweigh the likelihood of self-defense use. (David Hemenway and Sara J. Solnick, "The Epidemiology of Self-defense Gun Use: Evidence from the National Crime Victimization Surveys 2007–2011," Preventive Medicine 79 (2015): 22–27.)

Fact- The presence of a gun significantly increases the risk of gun death. (Andrew Anglemyer, Tara Horvath, and George Rutherford, "The Accessibility of Firearms and Risk for Suicide and Homicide Victimization Among Household Members: a Systematic Review and Metaanalysis," Annals of Internal Medicine 160, no. 2 (2014): 101–110; David Hemenway, "Risks and Benefits of a Gun in the Home," American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine 5, no. 6 (2011): 502–511; Matthew Miller, Deborah Azrael, and David Hemenway, "Firearm Availability and Unintentional Firearm Deaths," Accident Analysis & Prevention 33, no. 4 (2001): 477–484.)

Fact- In the last five years there have been more than 90 incidents of mishandled guns at schools, and that is just the publically reports incidents. (Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, "Mishandled Guns in Schools Database," last updated January 17, 2019.)

Fact- Unsecured firearms in the home are a major source of guns used in school shootings.

(Bryan Vossekuil, et al., "The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the

Prevention of School Attacks in the United States,” US Secret Service and US Department of Education, July 2004, <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/preventingattacksreport.pdf>.)

Fact- Students and people under the age of 18 disproportionately perpetrate school

shootings. (From 2014-2018, the median age of shooters involved in gun violence incidents, as measured by the Center for Homeland Defense and Security K-12 School Shooting Database, was 17. The Washington Post, which tracks school shootings that result in death or injury, found that the median age of these lethal attackers is 16. David Riedman and Desmond O’Neill, “CHDS – K-12 School Shooting Database,” Center for Homeland Defense and Security, US Naval Postgraduate School, accessed January 30, 2019, www.chds.us/ssdb; John Woodrow Cox and Steven Rich, “Scarred by School Shootings,” The Washington Post, December 19, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/local/school-shootingsdatabase/?utm_term=.afec0d156984#methodology.)

Fact- Evidence shows that Child Access Prevention Laws prevent unauthorized firearm access.

(Peter Cummings, et al., “State Gun Safe Storage Laws and Child Mortality Due to Firearms,” JAMA 278, no. 13 (1997): 1084–1086; Daniel W. Webster, Jon S. Vernick, April M. Zeoli, and Jennifer A. Manganello, “Association Between Youth-Focused Firearm Laws and Youth Suicides,” JAMA 292, no. 5 (2004): 594–601)

Fact- Most mass shooters exhibit an average of 4 or 5 dangerous warning signs of their

violent intentions. (James Silver, Andre Simons, and Sarah Craun, “A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, June 2018, <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/preattack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf/view>.)

Fact- In the first three months of its implementation, an Extreme Risk Protection Order, in one state, disarmed four people who made threats against schools.

(Luke Broadwater, “Sheriff: Maryland’s ‘Red Flag’ Law Prompted Gun Seizures After Four ‘Significant Threats’ Against Schools,” The Baltimore Sun, January 15, 2019, <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/bs-md-red-flag-update-20190115-story.html>.)

Fact- 18-20 year olds comprise 36% of adult shooters involved in gun incidents at schools. The Newtown and Parkland shooters were too young to buy beer, but old enough to purchase AR-15 style rifles. (David Riedman and Desmond O’Neill, “CHDS – K-12 School Shooting Database,” Center for Homeland Defense and Security, US Naval Postgraduate School, accessed January 30, 2019, www.chds.us/ssdb.)

- 7 of 10 teenagers oppose arming school staff
- 8 of 10 teachers oppose arming school staff
- 7 of 10 parents oppose arming school staff

Let’s use the findings from all this research to make laws, like safe storage, ERPOs, and increasing the age to buy firearms, that will have the desired impact for Ohio voters. In the face of all this evidence, one wonders why we are still discussing the arming of school staff as a way to make our schools safer. More guns in more places is not the answer. We, as a nation, prove that every single day.