

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by: Hannah Barker

To the members of the committee considering Senate Bill 317.

I am an Ohio voter from Cincinnati, and I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 317.

It is a false idea that arming teachers and school staff keeps schools safer from shootings. While no amount of training makes it safe for teachers to carry guns in schools, this bill makes it even less safe by lowering training requirements.

The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, the nation's two largest teachers' organizations that represent millions of educators, oppose arming teachers. Additionally, a majority of teachers (specifically 73% from a March 2018 survey) oppose proposals to arm school staff at all. This bill would lower the training standards for teachers who are armed, going against the majority of what teachers want and need. We already ask teachers to do so much for our children. They shouldn't have to stress about becoming (or having co-workers becoming) armed and untrained military officers in stressful situations.

There are much better alternatives for keeping students and teachers safe from active shooters. Decreasing training requirements for carrying a firearm in schools is NOT one of them.

I think about how terrified I would be as a child if my teacher was carrying a gun. What if a kid grabs the gun? What if the teacher mistakenly shoots an innocent bystander out of fear? Teachers are not military or security professionals. Taking away any training requirements doesn't make sense—the more guns on school grounds, the more likely gun violence will occur, especially without training.

Please discontinue hearings on SB 317. Instead, focus your efforts on policies and initiatives that prevent school shootings from happening in the first place.

Sincerely,
Hannah Barker