

Testimony on Senate Bill 317  
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:  
Tamara Melnick

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. My name is Tamara Melnick, and I am a resident of Stark County. I am writing to you as a concerned Ohioan and parent in opposition to SB 317, which would reduce the training requirements for armed teachers in schools. There is no evidence that poorly trained civilians are effective in stopping an armed shooter situation, and there are plenty of examples of incidents involving armed teachers to show that this would be dangerous. Experts on school safety agree that arming teachers is ineffective and dangerous. It would damage already strapped school districts economically due to the increase in insurance costs, money which would be better applied towards actual education.

The proposed amendment does not improve this bill. It would create additional bureaucracy with additional costs without increasing safety. It is cruel and inhumane to put teachers in a position to shoot their students, on purpose or on accident. Even fully trained police officers make mistakes and have accidents.

My daughter attends Jackson Memorial Middle School, which had an incident in 2018 that traumatized our community. Armed teachers would not have made a difference. What would have made a difference is HB 240, a bill mandating safe storage of firearms. Keeping guns out of the hands of children is what improves school safety. I hope you consider the enormous amount of opposition to this bill and vote no on SB 317.

