

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Connor Marrott

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 Connor Marrott, and I am a high school senior from Notre Dame Cathedral Latin High School in Chardon, Ohio. I live in Concord Township.

The 2020 election will be the first election I can vote in, and this cycle I am understandably torn, especially in Ohio House and Senate elections. It's not contested that one of the main issues young people like me focus on is gun control, and this very issue that I rise before you today may be the defining factor in our votes. I completely understand that it isn't wise to be a one issue voter. But this issue is a matter of life and death.

In 2012, less than 15 minutes from my elementary school, shots rang out in the cafeteria in the early morning at Chardon High School leaving six people shot, three of them dead. It was a sad day for Ohio and a sad day for our country. I was in the third grade, but now, looking back on that horrific day, I question what is the promise of our great buckeye state?

The reason my great-grandparents came specifically to Ohio is because here, with God, all things are possible. Because here we don't just have the American dream, we have the Ohioan dream. The reality, the promise, that in our state we have communities that are uplifted, strong, and in those communities we have a right to be safe in our homes, places of worship, and, most importantly, our schools.

On February, 27th, 2012, that promise was broken, and you'll be responsible for breaking this uniquely Ohioan promise if you vote yes on SB 317. The issue of gun violence in schools takes lives every year, makes parents feel that unbelievable loss, and chips at our faith in our community, our state, and in leaders in this committee. It's always a looming threat when I walk into my first period trigonometry class.

Action has to be taken: I want to go to prom, I want to go to college, and, maybe, one day I'll be sitting where you're sitting, but, my faith in Ohio, and my life, will be at even

more of a risk with the passage of this legislation. You know why this puts my safety at risk: it allows my teacher to carry a gun in his or her classroom without completing the safety training currently required by law, this law introduces more guns on the campuses of thousands of schools, and it only requires that armed personnel have eight hours of training. This legislation will break, not fulfill, the promise of our state.

I wish I could talk to you for hours, but before I go I want to tell you about my grandfather. My grandfather was the proudest Ohioan you'd ever meet. He once told me that being a buckeye is so much more than caring about who wins in the horseshoe. Being buckeye means that you're strong, that you stick up for what you believe in, and, because I am standing here today, and because you are sitting up there, I know we both believe in the promise of our state. The promise that we are safe and secure, so be a buckeye. Be a buckeye for your constituents, be a buckeye for the millions of teachers across the state, and be a buckeye, sure for students like me, but, moreover, be a buckeye for my 12 year old sister and for the other millions of students who don't have a voice but will be directly affected by this legislation.

Don't be a politician for the special interests or the gun lobby, be a buckeye for the great people of Ohio by voting no on SB 317. Thank you.

Connor Marrott