

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
John Foley

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.

I am a father, grandfather, and retired educator. I served for 32 years as a special education teacher, elementary school administrator, central office administrator and ended my career as superintendent, all with Toledo Public Schools. I have grandchildren attending Toledo Schools.

I have worked with many dedicated teachers throughout my career and they are heroes. The majority of educators I have worked with are committed to helping their students become successful in school and in their lives. Some have not met that standard on a daily basis. SB 317 would allow teachers in either category the ability to carry a gun in school with limited training.

Educators, besides being heroes, are human. They are representative of the general population. They are not infallible, perfect or exempt from bias, mental illness, or stress. Putting more guns in schools in anyone's hands is a dangerous and ill-advised approach to gun violence. Putting guns in the hands of teachers with limited training is a formula for disaster.

Schools need to be a safe nurturing environment for students to learn and grow. Putting guns in the hands of teachers with limited training does not make a school safer nor does it take into account the feelings of students toward their teachers. Students must trust that their teachers are there to provide for their emotional and educational needs and not fear that they may be carrying a gun.

I urge this committee to stop the process of considering Senate Bill 317.

Make our schools safer by passing research driven legislation with positive results and pass Universal background check laws and red flag laws.

John Foley