

Testimony on Senate Bill 317  
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:  
MARY O'REILLY

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 Mary O'Reilly. I'm a lifelong Ohioan and have voted in every local, state and federal election in which I've been eligible. I'm writing to ask that you REJECT SB317, reckless legislation being pushed by the greedy gun lobby.

SB317 is dangerous and reckless. It would dramatically reduce safety training requirements for Ohio teachers and staff who carry loaded handguns inside K-12 public schools, thereby increasing the risk of gun accidents, injuries and death at the hands of well-meaning but insufficiently-trained gun handlers.

SB317 benefits no one except the gun industry. The gun industry is profit-driven; its only goal to sell more guns and increase its profits. SB317 would make it faster and easier for school employees to obtain and legally carry a loaded gun inside the school. No one benefits from having poorly-trained, inexperienced individuals armed with a loaded gun in stressful and dangerous situations. The gun industry and lobbyists are the only winners in this scenario. And the stakes are very, very high.

SB317 is untested and short-sighted. If state and federal governments continue to bow to the gun lobby as they have for decades, we will never solve our nation's horrific gun violence problem. The U.S. has the largest gun ownership per capita in the world; and while its population accounts for only 5% of global population, 31% of mass shootings globally from 1966-2012 took place in the U.S. There is a positive correlation between the number of guns and gun violence incidents. (U.S. Leads World in Mass Shootings, WSJ, Oct. 3, 2015). Introducing more guns and less gun training as a way to stem violence is wholly unproven, short-sighted and very dangerous to the school communities, parents and students in your district.

SB317 defies logic. Reducing gun safety training requirements for teachers and staff in response to increasing gun violence in schools is akin to The Red Cross reducing CPR training requirements in response to an increase in heart attacks among the general public. One does not solve the other; in fact, it can make it exponentially worse.

For these reasons and more, I urge you to vote NO on SB317.

Mary O'Reilly