

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
James Edmondson

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 worked for years as the “Peaceable Schools Coordinator” in the largest public high school in Washington, DC. My job was to work with staff and students to reduce an increase in violence in the school.

What worked: staff setting a tone of high expectations combined with respect and empathy for students, as well as peer mediation to empower students to solve their own problems. We saw a precipitous drop in suspensions, behavioral incidents, and an increase in student satisfaction.

What do we know would NOT have worked: bringing the very tools of violence we were working to limit - guns - onto the campus. Just like all the data shows, the presence of guns in schools increases the incidents of violence in the building, just like within homes. The insurance companies know this cause they often refuse to insure schools that have guns.

I strongly oppose SB317 because it irresponsibly introduces weapons of extreme violence into an environment we need to be sure has nothing of the sort.

James Edmondson