

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Christopher Wolf

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 writing today as a concerned citizen and voter in the state of Ohio about SB 317. I am opposed to the proposed bill and encourage you to oppose it. I believe the proposed bill, if enacted, would make our schools less safe. As we have witnessed recently, armed private citizens with no law enforcement authority and little or no formal training, make terrible and deadly decisions.

On August 25, Kyle Rittenhouse, a heavily armed 17-year-old, shot three people, killing two. Rittenhouse committed his shootings in Kenosha, WI where he had travelled with other militia members to assist in quelling protests arising from the shooting of Jacob Blake by law enforcement. Rittenhouse opened fire after a protestor hurled a plastic bag at him.

What does the Rittenhouse example have to do with my opposition to SB 317? Rittenhouse was a legally armed but inexperienced and poorly trained citizen who made an unjustified decision to open fire with deadly consequences. It is likely that similar events would occur in our schools if teachers with insufficient training and no experience in law enforcement carry weapons to school.

As the recent police involved shootings show, even experienced law enforcement professionals don't always make the right choice when deciding to discharge their weapon. How, then, can we trust teachers with no experience and little or no training to make the right choice? We can't. Armed teachers with no experience and little or no training would make our school campuses more dangerous.

Lastly, I'd like to say that SB 317 seems to me to be an attempt to more heavily weaponize our schools without incurring the cost associated with expanding the number of trained school security personnel, resource offices, etc. In short SB 317, would provide our legislature and our school districts with a free way to arm more people at our schools, with the hope being that this will deter school shooters. If the legislature or a school district truly believes that more armed personnel at our schools will have a

deterrent effect, then they ought to pay the associated price for making that happen by hiring appropriately experienced, trained and qualified people for the job.

Given the points made above, I urge you to discontinue your pursuit of the passage of this bill. To the extent SB 317 is voted on, I urge the members of the committee to vote, "No".

Sincerely,
Chris Wolf
Rocky River, Ohio