

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Dianne Frimel

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 lifelong resident of Ohio who spent 30 years teaching in a public school at the middle school level. As a retired teacher and a concerned citizen I am adamantly opposed to SB 317. I know from experience the myriad responsibilities, duties, and tasks that are required of teachers as they manage a classroom in addition to the intellectual and emotional work they do to educate and care for their students. I'm also fully aware of the constant challenge public schools face with budgeting and remaining fiscally responsible to the taxpayers. I see SB 317 putting our teachers and their students at a high risk and adding another financial problem to our already over-burdened school districts.

As SB 317 would arm school personnel with loaded guns and require minimal training it would not make our schools safer, only more dangerous. Please see giffords.org for an updated list of school incidents in which guns assigned to school personnel ended up in the hands of students at the school. Please also consider how difficult it will be for police to know in the heat of the moment that the person armed with a gun is a teacher and not the perpetrator when they arrive at a school with an active shooter. And please remember that the purpose of a loaded gun is to injure another person or end a life. Having guns in our schools is just not safe. There is no amount of training that would make it safe for teachers to carry loaded guns in schools. SB 317 would actually reduce the current training requirement from over 700 hours to only 8 making an already dangerous situation worse.

We also need to ask how already financially strapped school districts afford the cost of increased liability insurance that is required for arming teachers. Our tax dollars should be supporting our school districts in the education and care of our children, not to cover the costs of a policy that only puts our children at an increased risk of danger. Please vote against SB 317.

Dianne Frimel