

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Erin Ketch

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 Erin Ketch and I have been a classroom teacher for almost 16 years. During this time, I have taught students from every background imaginable-- and as a teacher in an urban school, I have seen many situations and stories. However, in all of my years teaching, I have never had a moment where I thought that being armed would have made my students safer.

I have spent many nights awake, thinking of what would happen if an intruder came in and threatened the lives of my students. This situation actually happened to me in 2011, when a homeless person broke into our school, broke into my classroom when I was taking my class to a meeting, and robbed me by stealing items from my purse. Even then, I did not and do not feel that a gun would have made me safer.

The thought of having a gun in my classroom, even locked, is truly unimaginable. I have taught students with severe mental disturbances, including schizophrenia, in whose hands a gun would be a weapon against others. I have had students who were easily capable of picking or unlocking even the stealthiest of locks, including former students who are currently in jail or prison for armed robbery. I certainly wouldn't be carrying a gun around in my pocket all day, so it would have be locked in my room somewhere, where it would surely be accessible to a student who really wanted it.

At the end of the day, a gun will not make me feel safer. What WOULD make me feel safer is if we could find a way to prevent firearms from getting in the hands of those who shouldn't have them in the first place. That is clearly not a priority right now.

Thank you,
Erin Ketch