

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Lisa Galek

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 resident of Broadview Heights, Ohio, a mother of three public school students, and a proud voter.

Senate Bill 317 is a dangerous piece of legislation that would drastically reduce safety training requirements for teachers who carry loaded handguns inside elementary, middle, and high schools. Tragically, introducing more guns in schools actually increases the risk of gun violence. Guns in the hands of untrained teachers have been misplaced, stolen, or even discharged on school grounds. SB 317 would not make our children safer. That's why the nation's two largest teachers' organizations oppose allowing firearms in schools.

On Wednesday, my six-year-old daughter and I will visit her first grade classroom for the first time. Her school district has worked hard to be able to offer a schedule of in-person hybrid classes. When my daughter meets her teacher, she will see an adult wearing a mask, who is using hand sanitizer or gloves, submits to daily temperature checks, and does not come within six feet of her students while instructing them. This is all being done to protect my child. To keep her safe. Yet, if SB 317 passes, that same teacher could walk into a classroom filled with six and seven-year-olds wearing a mask and carrying a loaded gun.

Easy access to guns in a classroom full of curious and anxious children is a recipe for disaster. Our kids have enough to worry about this coming school year. As an Ohioan and as a mother, I urge you all to vote against SB 317 and end this madness once and for all.

Lisa Galek