

Testimony on Senate Bill 317  
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:  
Christina Collins

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 Dr. Christina Collins. I am a resident of Medina, Ohio, a mother of four children under the age of 11, and an educator who has been both a high school teacher and a district administrator for curriculum and instruction. During my career I have been responsible for planning and implementing teacher professional development for many initiatives, and I know from first-hand experience how important adequate training is.

It seems like we are always providing professional development at the local level for a variety of needs: a new curriculum, new standards, assessment writing, data usage, social-emotional learning, differentiation. An immense amount of planning and preparation goes into this work. Typically, we spend at least a day with initial training, followed by multiple follow-up trainings (perhaps a half-day or early release or late arrival), and often including in-classroom, job-embedded training. There are timelines for implementation, benchmarks for fidelity, and sometimes classroom coaches who check in individually with teachers to ensure their comfort and skill development. A well-planned professional development opportunity for a single initiative usually spans at least a year, if not several years, and takes countless hours and adequate funding to implement well.

And yet, these professional development opportunities provided by districts are building on knowledge teachers already have from their preservice and continuing learning because they are professionals in education. They are knowledgeable about their craft, students, learning progressions, strategies, data, and their content, and despite this, a well-planned professional development still takes significant time and support to implement.

What, then, would be an appropriate amount of training for an initiative that does not build on prior knowledge or utilize teachers' expertise in education? From my years of experience, such training would require years of ongoing learning opportunities and support to implement well.

Teachers do not have professional experience or prior knowledge in carrying or using a deadly weapon as part of their practice. Those with personal experience and training have generally not had training specific to gun carrying or usage in a school filled with children. SB317 proposes only 8 hours of training for school personnel to carry weapons in buildings. I cannot imagine implementing anything in a school district with only 8 hours of training; it would be a failure on my part to expect any real learning or understanding to take place with such minimal training. Of note, this minimal requirement is significantly less than what is required of police officers, who have actual expertise in safety.

As both a mother and someone who has direct knowledge of how much support must be provided in training, I urge you to vote against SB 317. For something as significant and important as the safety of children, we need to ensure adequate and appropriate training that spans far more than 8 hours.

Christina Collins