

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Marissa Griesmar

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 Marissa Griesmar and I am a resident of Lyndhurst, Ohio. I am a school social worker who has worked in multiple schools all across Ohio, with grades K-12, in both urban and rural settings. No matter where you go, one thing remains constant: guns do not make students feel safe. I strongly oppose SB 317.

Students are hyperaware of adults in the building who carry guns. For students (or teachers) who have experienced gun violence and trauma, this is a major distraction. Having more guns in a school building does not make it more safe. In fact, the focus on arming school employees actually ignores the many risks and consequences of bringing guns into schools. There is no amount of training that would make it safe for teachers to be armed, and teachers and school safety experts overwhelmingly oppose allowing guns in schools.

We need to focus our resources elsewhere. We should be arming our teachers with the school supplies they need to get through the year. We also need to ensure that our schools are equipped with highly trained staff. If we want to make our schools safer, I suggest we hire more social workers to address the individual safety needs of each school population.

Marissa Griesmar