

Chairman Coley, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My Name is Sandra Fiehrer. I'm a concerned Ohioan, community volunteer and mom. I cannot believe that I have to submit testimony AGAIN against this ridiculous bill while moms everywhere are worrying about sending their children to school in the middle of a pandemic. I'm tired of the persistent toxic disconnect between this legislature and the majority of Ohio constituents. I am opposed to SB317 and so is EVERY teacher that I know. Just yesterday a teacher from New Albany told me that she "could not sit on the sidelines any longer." You will be reading her testimony today.

In the middle of a global pandemic, it's infuriating that your legislative priority is to expand the use of guns in our schools. Make no mistake, introducing more guns into schools actually increases the risk of gun violence. There have been numerous incidents already where a gun has been discharged by the staff on school grounds.<sup>1</sup> It is a fact that gun violence disproportionately impacts communities of color negatively and schools in these communities will no doubt be similarly impacted. Are you paying attention at all to what is going on in this country? Do you understand the issues driving this national civil unrest right now? Why would you bring that into schools in Ohio? Every teacher I know opposes allowing guns in schools, full stop. School safety experts agree. I'm worried for my friends who are teachers and my friends' children in school.

SB317 would exempt teachers from the current state training requirement: basic peace officer training or 20 years of active duty as a peace officer. Allowing armed personnel in schools with just 8 hours or less of concealed carry training is a grave mistake. It serves one purpose, to override the court decision against allowing this. You wrote this bill to get around the 12th Circuit Court of Appeals decision that ruled Madison Local Schools in Senator Coley's district could not pass a resolution to allow firearms in school safety zones without the required safety training. You're willing to put all Ohio students and staff at risk to appease this one district. This will not reduce school shootings. The gun lobby attempts to justify these policies by invoking fear of active shooter situations. We've had enough of their fear mongering. Ohio gun lobbyists continue to push dangerous legislation, this time to drastically reduce safety training for school staff. Arming civilians with less training than law enforcement officers is not an effective way to stop school shootings.<sup>2</sup> I implore you to stop listening to lobbyists and PACS and listen to constituents who are teachers and parents. As my 79 year old Mom in Columbus said "this makes no sense.'

We're in the middle of a pandemic. How is THIS what you should be working on right now as my representatives? Why do I have to keep spending my time writing these testimonies? I have

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<sup>1</sup> Seltzer A, Winston H, Hitchcock O. Breaking: Man arrested in 2013 murder of Dreyfoos school janitors. The Palm Beach Post. May 25, 2017. <https://pbco.st/2RE4R8V>. Schrott M. Officer accidentally discharges weapon at George Washington Middle School. Alexandria Times. March 13, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2BnC8zT>. See also: Everytown For Gun Safety. Gunfire on School Grounds. <https://bit.ly/2ZMXpj>

<sup>2</sup> Rostker BD, Hanser LM, Hix WM, et al. Evolution of the New York City Police Department firearm training and firearm discharge review process. Rand Corporation. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG717.html>. Published 2008

talked about guns in classrooms with many neighbors, voters in our precincts and Ohioans signing the background check petition. Their answer is always the same: WTF?! This is so far from the top priority for every parent I know and I am shocked that you don't get that. Or maybe I'm not now that we've all seen the corruption in this legislature. You're acting as if you believe you're not accountable.