

Testimony on Senate Bill 317  
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:  
Toni Ehrman

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 Toni Ehrman. I have lived in Ohio for 70 years, and in Medina County for 35 years. I vote regularly. I worked as an educator in the private and public sectors as a teacher and guidance counselor for 40 years, and just retired from public education four years ago. My mother and most of her friends taught in the Akron Public Schools until they retired, and most of my friends are current or retired educators.

When I was in public education, my peers and I expressed fear of being in a situation with an active shooter, being responsible for the lives of the students in our care. We participated in drills for such an event, and every time, some of us adults were traumatized. During the drills, we knew that we would do our best to protect our students, and the police would arrive soon.

Never did we think that we should be armed. Instead, we watched diligently for students who displayed potential violent behavior, students made referrals when they were concerned about their peers, and then we followed district procedures to ensure safety for all. The district worked with recommendations from law enforcement to fortify the entrances, to institute stiffer security to enter the building, to coordinate school staff with law enforcement personnel, to practice lockdown drills, and to follow specific safety procedures daily. After I retired, my former district continued their efforts.

Educators I know do not want the responsibility of carrying a gun: (1) They worry that a student could access the weapon, and they worry the weapon could harm innocent students. (2) Your bill eliminates the necessary training for concealed gun carry training in a school setting. It makes sense to follow the current law that requires armed educators to have 20 years of peace officer experience or the equivalent of an approved Ohio Police Officer Training Academy training. (3) Eight hours of training, which could include six hours of on-line gun training, hardly makes a person competent to handle a gun, especially around students in elementary, middle, and high schools. (4) Eight hours of on-line training is a ridiculous substitution for Ohio Police Officer Training Academy training or 20 years of law enforcement experience.

This bill has the potential for tragedy in an already dangerous situation. Please discontinue hearings for SB 317.

Sincerely,  
Toni Ehrman

