

Testimony on Senate Bill 317

Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Senator William P. Coley II, Chair

Senator Matt Huffman, Vice Chair

Senator Hearcel F. Craig, Ranking Member

Submitted by: Sieglinde Martin

Good morning Chair Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 317.

My name is Sieglinde Martin. I am testifying as a constituent, a mother, a grandmother, a retired licensed Pediatric Physical Therapist and resident of central Ohio for over fifty years. I am concerned about S.B. 317.

I am sorry that, due to the Covid-19 Epidemic, as one of the medically designated at-risk Citizens, I am unable to attend today's Hearing.

The proposed Senate Bill 317 would allow public school personnel to carry handguns inside elementary, middle and high schools with as little as 8 hours of training or no training, instead of the required completed basic peace officer training course or 20 years of active duty as a peace officer.

Allowing an untrained teacher or any other school employee to bring a loaded gun to school is a foolish proposal. Honorable Senator Coley and Co-sponsors of SB 317, I am unable to understand why you are proposing this legislation. School zones have to be gun-free zones for a good reason.

Bringing guns into schools increases the risk of gun violence. A false alarm may occur and an innocent parent, student, or teacher may be

shot. What a tragic mistake that will be! Saying sorry afterwards will not heal a disabling injury or give life to the killed victim. A child may die this way!

My granddaughter Annika is a senior at Big Walnut Highschool. Do I want her exposed to such a dangerous possibility? No, I want her safe in school! I want her to be just as safe as my four children had been when they attended school in the 70th and 80th right here in Franklin County.

It is upsetting to me and Annika's parents to contemplate that teachers would bring guns to Big Walnut High School. Isn't it stressful enough that our school children are endangered by Covid-19? You can't outlaw a virus epidemic but you can keep our school gun-free. It is your duty to do so.

Already there have been incidents where guns carried into schools by school personnel were later found in the hands of students. I remember reading about one of those incidents happening in an Ohio elementary school. Fortunately, at that time the gun was retrieved before the young child used it.

Senate Bill 317 will make Ohio schools not safer but more dangerous.

I understand that SB 317 was introduced in support of a small local school district in Madison County. Are these unwise School District Administrators representative for the majority of school districts in Ohio? I don't believe so.

SB 317 would force the majority of Ohio voters to abide by the rules created in support of a small minority. This legislation will effectively undermine our democratic principle of majority rule. It will enable a "dictatorship by a small minority."

Teachers and school safety experts oppose allowing guns in school. The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association oppose guns in schools.

I urge you to vote against Senate Bill 317.

Respectfully,

Sieglinde Martin