

Testimony on HB 99

Criminal Justice Committee

Submitted by:

Denise Trudeau

Chair LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to HB 99.

As an Ohio resident, a voter and someone who taught for 35 years, I must express my concern about and opposition to this bill that would reduce training requirements for armed teachers. Arming teachers would be dangerous. Arming teachers with little training would be even more dangerous.

I offer another reason for not arming teachers - it wouldn't work. The gun must be stored safely, separate from the ammunition. Where would they be stored to be safe but accessible at the same time? How would the teacher get to it quickly enough? How do you make sure the teacher with the gun is where you would need them to be when they need to be there?

If a shooter came into a school, teachers would first have to shepherd their students into the safest spot in the room and keep them quiet. Do they just wait to see if the shooter comes to their room or do they go looking for him, leaving their students alone? If they encounter him, will they actually be able to shoot? Will they hit him? Can they go up against the semiautomatic weapons he likely has? Will they shoot the wrong person? How do they convince any law enforcement they run into that they themselves are not the shooter? What are the chances someone with little or no training would survive, much less defend others, in a situation like this?

These are questions that come into my mind when I try to imagine how arming teachers would play out. I don't know if those who support arming teachers think that a school shooter situation would be like a movie or video game, but my years in a variety of school settings and lock down drills has taught me it would not.

Preventing gun violence would be a more effective way to make schools safer. Making the school buildings themselves more secure and passing stronger gun safety laws to keep guns out of the shooters' hands would help. Hiring more school counselors and training teachers to identify and intervene with students who show signs of posing a risk would all be better approaches to improve school safety

Please do not support HB 99. There are other, better ways to keep our kids safe.

Thank you for your time,

Denise Trudeau