

**House Criminal Justice Committee
Opposition Testimony HB 99**

Submitted by:
Patricia Krummrich
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Chair LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and
Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee. My name is Pat Krummrich and I strongly oppose HB 99.

Would any of you really allow your children or grandchildren to spend 8 hours every day, in the close presence of someone carrying a loaded gun without extensive firearm training? Ohioans have made their choice clear. When a very similar bill, SB 317, was proposed last year, Ohioans submitted more than 250 testimonies in opposition. The total testimonies for the Proponents? Two, both by paid gun lobbyists. Your citizens are trying to tell you something! The requirement of 8 hours of training (all but 2 of which can be completed online) in HB 99 is not a significant improvement. It does not transform this into a safe standard for teachers or school staff to be carrying guns in schools.

I am a bereaved parent, having lost my beautiful daughter when she was 15. This is a journey you do not want to put someone through. Yet if you pass this bill, you will likely do just that.

I am also a retired Pediatric Speech Pathologist from Akron Children's, a teacher and high school volleyball coach. I live in the Jackson Local School District (a suburban and rural area) where our community endured the trauma of a student planning a school shooting and then shooting himself in the school bathroom.

According to the **The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** a gun in the home is 43 times more likely to be used to kill a friend or family member than an intruder. So until there is evidence to the contrary, we must assume that having a gun in the school makes it much more likely that the weapon will result in an accidental shooting, suicide or even homicide, rather than stopping an intruding school shooter. No longer can parents try

to safeguard their child from gun death or injury by keeping guns out of their home, because the bulk of their child's school day could be spent a few feet away from a loaded gun, in the hands of an adult with as little as 2 hours of actual shooting range practice (I won't even let my grandchild ride in a car with a driver who has only had 2 hours time behind the wheel)! And for the teen who is struggling with thoughts of suicide, revenge or fame, no need to try to figure out where to get a gun, they can just get it at school!

With the images of Kyle Rittenhouse, a 17 year old child strolling down the street with a long gun, fresh in our memories, this committee seems determined to put MORE guns where children and teens can get hold of them. What a thrill it appeared to be for Kyle to be playing "militia"! What a fun game it is for a 5 year old to grab a gun from a police officer's holster. What a curious thing to see a gun left by a teacher on the counter in the school bathroom! What 8 year old wouldn't want to check out such forbidden treasure!

While this bill would give school districts the option to arm school staff with ridiculously little firearm training, School Peace Officers would continue to be (rightly) required to have 700+ hours of training or years of experience. I can understand that some districts may choose to have a well-trained school peace officer as part of their safety plan. We do at Jackson Local. At least under current law, we know that if an adult is armed in the school, they have had extensive weapons and crisis response training. Why would anyone believe that a math teacher, coach or custodian would magically be better equipped than a police officer to handle a deadly weapon and therefore require less training?

And in this explosive time of racial tension, when even well trained policemen are under tremendous strain between trying to do their job but also trying to be fair to black and brown Americans (who are 5 x more likely to be shot by police than white Americans) is it reasonable to place our teachers in those situations too? Without adequate training? The teachers I know say "NO" in large numbers. The sad likelihood is that some school personnel will shoot an innocent student out of a perception that the child was a threat when they were not. Parents, don't send your son to school in a hoodie, especially if he has dark skin.

School shootings are a focus of media attention and raise awareness about

firearm deaths among children and teens. But school shootings remain the smallest proportion of gun deaths nationwide, accounting for 1.2% of all homicides among 5 to 18-year-olds. In Ohio, an average of 113 children and teens die by guns every year, and 63% of these deaths are homicides. Another 38% of firearm-related deaths in this age group are suicides, while the rest are accidental shootings or undetermined causes. We all want to stop the tragedy of school shootings. But there is no evidence that poorly trained civilians are effective in stopping an armed shooter situation. On the other hand, there have been more than 90 publicly reported incidents of mishandled guns at schools in the last five years, including instances where staff accidentally discharged their guns, sometimes injuring themselves or children, or have allowed their gun to fall into the hands of a student.

I have heard legislators state that we cannot use a "one size fits all" approach to setting training standards for teachers to carry guns. Yet we have minimum state age requirements for buying a gun; for graduating high school; for training of doctors, teachers, nurses; for driver's licenses. That's why we have a state constitution and a state government. If the state of Ohio, abdicates its responsibility to protect our children on this issue, it will provide cover for Ohio school districts to choose the cheapest path, arming teachers with minimal to no training. Parents will be forced to send our children to school worrying more about the real possibility of a gun being discharged in their classroom than the danger of a mass shooter. Districts will be able to brush off parent's fears by saying, "Our safety policy meets state standards", which will be no standard at all.

Please understand that if you push this bill through during this chaotic time of COVID and racial unrest, you will face enormous voter outcry and backlash.

Thank you for your attention,
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