

Criminal Justice Committee
Opposition Testimony HB 99
from Jessica Hubbard
3/23/2021

Dear Chairman LaRe and Members of the Committee

I am an Ohio resident and voter. I'm also a kindergarten teacher working in a public school in Northeast Ohio. I am writing because I strongly oppose HB 99. I urge you to reject HB 99 in order to ensure the safety of your constituents. Allowing civilians to carry guns in schools is a safety hazard for students and staff. Introducing more guns in schools increases the risk of gun violence, even if accidental. There have been documented instances of guns being discharged by school staff on school grounds and guns being misplaced or stolen and ending up in the hands of students. We cannot allow for this risk in our schools. As an early childhood educator, the safety of public school students is of utmost importance to me. However, research shows that the safety and overall well-being of students increases when they have access to mental health professionals and supportive classroom environments. There is no evidence that armed security officers in schools increase school safety, let alone armed civilians with minimal training. Personally, I do not feel comfortable with firearms in my classroom and I believe that my students and their families feel the same way. Research shows that the presence of armed security officers may actually be harmful to students. This risk of harm would surely increase by arming civilians in schools. Because of this, I feel strongly that we should not put resources towards arming school staff, especially when schools already have limited safety resources for students including mental health professionals. I strongly urge you to discontinue hearings on HB 99.

Thank you,

Jessica Hubbard