

Testimony on Senate HB 99  
Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee

Submitted by:  
Chris Wolf

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.

I am writing today as a concerned citizen and voter in the state of Ohio. I am opposed to HB 99 and encourage you to oppose it as well. The proposed bill, if enacted, would not achieve the goals that proponents of the bill put forward.

1. Mr. Eaton, of the Buckeye Firearms Association claims HB 99 to simply be “clarification of existing law”. You know this is untrue. Existing law is clear on training and experience requirements for armed personnel within our schools. This bill is an attempt to significantly revise already clear laws.
2. Enactment of this legislation would not increase safety within our schools. The minimum requirements for CCW training contain no training that prepares the CCW holder to behave effectively and appropriately in an active-shooter situation. Two hours on a gun range is not sufficient preparation for someone to correctly distinguish friend from foe in a chaotic and highly stressful situation. As police involved shootings over the past year show, even experienced law enforcement professionals do not always make the right choice when deciding to discharge their weapon. How, then, can we trust teachers with no experience and no relevant training to make the right choice? We can’t.
3. Mr. Eaton and proponents of this bill suggest that simply having more people carrying guns on school campuses will make those schools safer. This is asserted with no supporting evidence. In fact, research and data show the opposite to be true – more heavily armed people increases the likelihood of gun violence. 2020 was the deadliest gun violence year for the United States in decades (more than 20,000 killed by gun violence and 24,000 suicides by gun in 2020). This increase in gun deaths corresponds with a surge in the purchase in guns across the U.S. - by some estimates, gun sales were up 65% in 2020 when compared to 2019. If more people carrying more guns makes us safer, wouldn’t there be an inverse correlation between gun sales and deaths by gun?

If the goal of the Buckeye Firearms Association and this Committee is to increase safety in our schools and more armed personnel on school campuses accomplishes that goal, I would assert

that a remedy to accomplish the goal already exists. Namely, hire more school security personnel who meet the requirements of existing laws.

HB 99 seems to be an attempt to more heavily weaponize our schools without incurring the cost associated with expanding the number of trained school security personnel, resource officers, etc. As the old adage goes, "You get what you pay for". Why sacrifice the safety of our children to save a few bucks? Instead, I would encourage the legislature to consider using some of Ohio's share of the American Rescue Plan to increase school security staff and achieve the stated goal.

Given the points made above, I urge you to discontinue your pursuit of the passage of this bill. To the extent HB 99 is voted on, I urge the members of the committee to vote, "No".

Sincerely,  
Chris Wolf  
Rocky River, Ohio