

Testimony on House Bill 99
House Criminal Justice Committee
April 15, 2021

Submitted by:
Abbie Youkilis

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 House Bill 99. I am Abbie Youkilis, a grieving aunt to my forever 14-year-old niece, Jaime Guttenberg, who was shot dead while attending school in Parkland Florida despite the presence of trained armed security.

Jaime's father, my brother Fred, asked me to tell you this: "As Jaime's dad, and unlike all of you, I have seen the video of the Parkland shooting. Adding more shooters to this mix would not have stopped the previously law abiding gun owner who chose to enter school with an AR 15. As soon as his surprise attack and the sounds of bullets began, the chaos that followed was immediate and extreme. The smoke filling the hallways combined with children and adults running in all directions only ensured that additional bullets from additional guns would have lead to additional dead students."

Thankfully, mass shootings in schools are infrequent. Arming untrained teachers will not stop shooters intent on murder and mayhem from gaining access to guns, which is the underlying problem. What it will do is ensure additional guns in school on a daily basis, and therefore additional gun violence. Guns will accidentally be left out by those carrying them, as has already happened on many occasions. Attached to this testimony, you will find a list of 90 publicly reported incidents of mishandled guns in schools in the past 5 years compiled by Giffords.¹ Furthermore, what used to be considered normal "school violence" like a fistfight, may escalate if untrained teachers are carrying guns. If a student were to create a loud disturbance and startle those nearby, it's not inconceivable that an untrained armed teacher might overreact in this currently charged

environment. It is predictable that putting guns in the hands of untrained teachers will have unintended catastrophic results and will not prevent school shootings.

Teachers who experienced the Parkland shooting are against arming teachers as described in the attached article.² A majority of Ohioans is against arming teachers in school as described in the attached article.³

Jaime's dad implores you: "A school is an environment where teachers should teach and security should secure. Even people with training fail as happened in Parkland. Do not make it worse."

1. <https://giffords.org/blog/2020/03/every-incident-of-mishandled-guns-in-schools-blog/>
2. <https://www.marieclaire.com/politics/a26285549/parkland-shooting-anniversary-arming-teachers-response/>
3. <https://www.cleveland19.com/story/37789196/ohio-voter-poll-armed-police-veterans-make-schools-safer-split-on-teachers-having-guns/>

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