

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

Submitted by:
Melinda A. Barnhardt

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. My name is Melinda Barnhardt, and I am a resident of Springfield, Ohio.

I oppose House Bill 99 on the grounds that firing at someone in an emergency situation is far different than firing at a target. The Ohio Education Association opposes this bill, and for good reason. A great deal of training is necessary in order to have a sense of when and how, in a threatening situation, to fire. It makes no sense that teachers with far less training than law enforcement officers can be expected to fire accurately in an emergency. With such a law's enactment, teachers could end up facing horrible, career-ending tragedies, not to mention the risks that the law would incur for students, law enforcement, and the school community.

The very concept of focusing on arming teachers ignores the risks of bringing more guns into schools in the first place: Every teacher and administrator knows "If it's there, students will figure out how to find it."

I implore the House Criminal Justice Committee to reject this bill.

Respectfully,

Melinda A. Barnhardt