

Testimony on House Bill 99

House Criminal Justice Committee

March 24, 2021

Submitted by:

Marilyn Rossiter

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 Marilyn Rossiter] and I am a retired teacher and grandparent of three students, one in elementary, one in middle school, and one in high school at Dalton Local Schools, Dalton, Ohio.

More guns will only increase the chances of violence and death. Please hear my story.

After teaching music in the public schools for nearly twenty years in Ohio, I spent two years in Liberia, West Africa as a peacebuilder and teacher to secondarily traumatized children, with some having been child soldiers in the second civil war there (1999-2003). I am sickened by the possibility of United States teachers being issued guns with little or no training to promote "safety".

As a teacher in a country that had experienced a 24-year civil war, there was no one who wasn't traumatized in some way. They are still dealing with the effects of this easy killing via firearms. Where there are guns, there will eventually be violence. Violence begets more violence. When will we ever learn? Now the USA has more guns than any other country, more guns than citizens! We've bought into the erroneous belief that strength through force works.

Both the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association oppose allowing guns in schools.

Classrooms need to be safe places for creativity, growth and learning through enjoyment, not fear. Bringing guns into the classroom for "safety" will not work. Untrained armed teachers would be high risks to students, law enforcement and to themselves. I cannot even imagine teaching music, which requires games, skill and enjoyment, in an armed classroom. Extensive training would be needed for all teachers and our schools are already strapped for money.

We seem to be going down the same dangerous path as Liberia. More weapons do not equal safer classrooms. Please, please do not vote for this dangerous bill. Our schools, our children deserve better. Conflict resolution and mediation classes would be the safest and most effective use of tax payers money. Please do not vote yes on House Bill 99.

