



Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence

4-13-21

Criminal Justice Committee

Chairman Jeff LaRe , D.J. Swearingen, Vice Chair David Leland, Cindy Abrams, Willis E. Blackshear, Jr. Sedrick Denson, Tavia Galonski, Adam C. Miller, Phil Plummer, Sharon A. Ray, Jean Schmidt, Bill Seitz, Andrea White .

Testimony in opposition to HB99.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our opposition to HB99. Due to the Covid virus we are not attending hearings.

HB99 says it will “exempt training if allowed to go armed in school safety zone.” The bill would change Ohio law on mandatory training for people given permission by their school boards to carry lethal weapons into schools. As we see across the country, police officers with their training are making lethal mistakes with their firearms. Will teachers be able to make better decisions?

OCAGV questions why local control is best on firearm training for teachers even though every other issue with firearms is preempted by state control. We support local firearm ordinances so that the people in their communities could decide on firearm laws but preemption was supposedly passed so that Ohio laws would be consistent across the states and has included more restrictions as the years have gone by.

Over the years the training for CCW has also been reduced even though some who teach the courses oppose it. If there is anything that deserves rigorous training it is when there is a lethal weapon involved. That applies to anyone that thinks they are suited for and capable of using that lethal force in our schools around our children and teachers. It is about good judgement and respect for life not just proficiency.

Resource officers have oversight from their respective law enforcement agencies. They receive training on building trust and responding to young people. Who will provide the oversight for the people a board determines can carry a gun when each place in Ohio might see those requirements and training to be different. Who will take the responsibility in each school to determine appropriate behavior and training beyond shooting a gun for these volunteers?

The American Bar Association resolution states:

RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association opposes laws and policies that would authorize teachers, principals or other non-security school personnel to possess a firearm in, or on the grounds of, a pre-K through grade 12 public, parochial, or private school, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association opposes the use of government or public funds to provide firearms training to teachers, principals, or other non-security school personnel, or to purchase firearms for those individuals.

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/gun_violence/policy/19M106A/?emci=0d522af0-f5cc-ea11-9b05-00155d03bda0&emdi=d8c6efa7-67ce-ea11-9b05-00155d03bda0&ceid=952920

Statistics don't show that more guns make us safer. Parents don't need to add armed volunteers to their worries about their children in school. Educators are not responsible for armed resistance or working in an armed workplace by people that are possibly not trained well and or have no experience with children.

HB99 states that at a minimum armed staff – this bill identifies as teachers- would require the same training provided for a concealed carry license. Some CCW trainers have said that the current training is not sufficient for people carrying lethal weapons. We ask who will train the 'staff' and is there a common education that would give them instructions on when not to shoot.

Law enforcement report to their departments. Who will the armed teachers report to? Will they have additional annual training? Are other staff allowed to know who is carrying a weapon in the school? As it is permitted now, the school board can and does keep their permissions to allow staff/teachers secret and also keeps their identity secret. Does a teacher that accepts a job or currently has one in a school have a right to know about their working conditions?

The courts are still debating if the districts that have proceeded with secret meetings and permissions are within the law.

The other conclusion that is questionable is that local school boards can decide matters on lethal weapons when the Ohio legislature has repeatedly prevented any local laws/ordinances on firearms. This bill says to Ohioans you cannot determine local gun laws unless we decide it is in the legislature's best interest to do so.

Our schools are a strong example to our children, more weapons will not allow them to learn in positive surroundings by caring professionals. Parents and children have enough to worry about in today's world, wondering if their teacher is carrying a gun should not be one of them.

The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence opposes HB99 and asks you to vote no.

If we can provide any answers we would be glad to do so.

Thank you.

Toby Hoover
Founder, Survivor
Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence