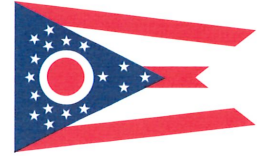




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Testimony on House Bill 99

House Criminal Justice Committee

April 15, 2021

Chairman LaRe, Vice-Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mike Weinman, and I am here to give opposition testimony to HB 99 on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, Inc. (FOP). I am a retired Columbus police officer who currently serves as the director of government affairs for the FOP. I am proud to represent over 24,000 law enforcement professionals who risk their lives daily protecting members of our communities.

HB 99 allows for the arming of teachers or other school staff by the district's board of education. It is being argued that current law allows a school district to authorize teachers and other staff to carry a firearm in a school to protect students and peers. The FOP strongly disagrees with this interpretation. If a school employee, regardless of her position, is carrying a firearm, they are considered on duty according to ORC 109.78(D). When armed, the teacher's primary responsibility is no longer teaching but an armed first responder. She will be required to abandon her students and respond to whatever threat may be in the building at a moment's notice.

Under the bill, each school board sets the training and qualification standards with the State's eight-hour concealed carry requirement as a minimum. Only two of those eight hours are spent on the firing range, and you do not have to demonstrate proficiency. Hundreds of individual firearms carry standards will be set by school board members who likely have no firearms training background. This sets the stage for private, for-profit companies to come in and influence the board into using their standards and using their companies to train school staff members - all without the input of parents and local law enforcement.

Police officers receive 60 hours of training associated with firearms, 46 of those hours on the range. This does not account for the hundreds of training hours to avoid using what officers have learned on the firing range. Through these hours of training and requalification training, officers are taught to suppress the physiological changes that occur during high-stress, traumatic events. Unfortunately, shooting accuracy still falls off. Teachers and school staff will not receive this training level during an eight-hour concealed carry

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class or a weekend-long training class – assuming the school requires the weekend class. Included in officer training is weapons retention. Officers are taught that going into any situation; you are bringing in a gun that can be used against you. Officers are trained to fight to keep that weapon.

Local communities should place highly trained, professional school resource officers in those buildings they feel need extra protection. These police officers have additional 40 hours of training to work in schools and bring unique talents into those buildings. The training these officers receive is second to none, and agencies regularly choose some of their most experienced men and women for these positions.

Again, the FOP opposes HB 99; our communities expect officers to be highly trained in the use of force and de-escalation; we should expect the same from armed school staff members. On behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify. I will be happy to address any questions that you may have at this time.