

Criminal Justice Committee

Opposition Testimony on HB 99

Submitted by: Jennifer Madaffer

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 Jennifer Madaffer. I am writing this testimony as a private, and very concerned, citizen. The proposed HB 99 bill (Who May Go Armed in Schools) would put Ohio children, teachers and parents at risk. There is no evidence that arming minimally trained "authorized persons", who may be teachers or community volunteers, reduces school shootings. Even thoroughly trained police often make poor decisions or shoot inaccurately in stressful situations. We cannot expect teachers or civilians with only 28 hours of training (much of which can be done online) to make life and death decisions. We cannot expect them to take the life of a student or accurately shoot into a crowd of children. We cannot assume that they will always safely store their weapon where a child cannot get hold of it. Many innocent lives will be lost due to this bill. The emotional trauma for students, staff and the community in these instances will be enormous. Vote NO on HB 99.

I find it very troubling that this bill was designed to overrule an Ohio Supreme Court Decision (Gabbard v. Madison Local School Dist. Bd. of Edn.) in which the Court ruled in favor of parents because their school district armed teachers or other personnel without adequate training. If people are going to be armed in schools, they should have the 700+ hours of Peace Officer training that current law provides. Please do not use our children as legal pawns in your lawsuits.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Madaffer