

Testimony on House Bill 99  
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Submitted by:  
Kathleen C. Ross

Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony in opposition to HB 99.

While it would appear that the goal of HB 99 is to keep Ohio's children safe in school, I strongly believe that they will only be at greater risk. Bringing guns into classrooms makes children less safe. Firearms are now the leading cause of death for America's children and teens. We must pay attention to the research: pass criminal background checks on all gun sales, pass red flag laws and safe storage laws, add physical security upgrades, develop emergency planning among staff, and provide access to school mental health professionals.

Keeping Ohio school children safe most definitely does not include radically reducing the current training requirement for armed teachers. The Ohio Supreme Court ruled that an armed teacher must have at least 20 years of experience as an active duty peace officer or have completed Ohio Peace Officer Training. HB 99 would gut that training requirement down to only 22 hours. There is no amount of training that makes it safe for teachers to carry guns in schools. If HB 99 passes we can most certainly expect more accidental shootings to occur, more guns winding up in unsecured locations, and, if a real school shooter enters the classroom, this piece of legislation will contribute to the loss of life of the children you are hoping to protect. For the safety of all of Ohio school children, please reject HB 99 and focus instead on legislation that would prevent school shootings before they occur.

Respectfully,

Kathleen C. Ross