

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 99
SENATE VETERANS AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

SUBMITTED BY:
SHAKER HEIGHTS BOARD OF EDUCATION

CHAIR HOAGLAND, VICE CHAIR JOHNSON, RANKING MEMBER THOMAS, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING OUR BOARD OF EDUCATION TO PRESENT THIS TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 99.

AS BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS, OUR GREATEST FEAR IS A GUNMAN WALKING INTO OUR BUILDINGS. WHEN WE HEAR SIRENS DURING THE DAY, OUR HEARTS STOP. INSTEAD OF OUR STATE LEGISLATURE PASSING LAWS THAT WOULD PROTECT OUR CHILDREN, HB 99 WILL MAKE OUR SCHOOLS SUBSTANTIALLY *LESS* SAFE. WE ARE IN STRONG OPPOSITION TO HB 99.

THE RESEARCH IS CLEAR THAT BRINGING GUNS INTO CLASSROOMS WILL MAKE CHILDREN LESS SAFE. FIREARMS ARE NOW THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN AND TEENS. THE LEADING CAUSE. SIMPLY HAVING ACCESS TO A GUN INCREASES THE RISK OF SUICIDE BY THREE TIMES AND HOMICIDE BY TWO TIMES. THE LESS CHILDREN ARE EXPOSED TO GUNS, THE SAFER THEY WILL BE. IF WE REALLY WANT TO KEEP STUDENTS SAFE, WE MUST LISTEN 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.¹

HB 99 IS TRYING TO PUT MORE GUNS IN THE VICINITY OF OUR CHILDREN, NOT LESS. AND WORSE, HB99 WOULD RADICALLY REDUCE THE CURRENT TRAINING REQUIREMENT FOR ARMED TEACHERS. THE OHIO SUPREME COURT RULED THAT AN ARMED TEACHER MUST HAVE AT LEAST 20 YEARS 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. IF HB99 PASSES WE CAN MOST CERTAINLY EXPECT MORE ACCIDENTAL SHOOTINGS TO OCCUR, MORE GUNS WINDING UP IN PRECARIOUS LOCATIONS, AND, SHOULD A REAL SCHOOL SHOOTER ENTER THE VICINITY, THIS PIECE OF LEGISLATION IS GOING TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE LOSS OF LIFE OF OUR CHILDREN. THIS IS OUR GREATEST FEAR! FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL OF OHIO'S

¹<https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-our-schools-safe-a-plan-to-stop-mass-shootings-and-end-all-gun-violence-in-american-schools/>

SCHOOL CHILDREN, PLEASE REJECT HB 99 AND FOCUS INSTEAD ON LEGISLATION THAT WOULD PREVENT SCHOOL SHOOTINGS BEFORE THEY OCCUR. LET TEACHERS REMAIN THE EDUCATORS OUR CHILDREN TRUST AND LET OFFICERS OF THE PEACE PERFORM THE DUTIES ONLY THEY ARE TRAINED TO DO.

RESPECTFULLY,

DR. EMMITT JOLLY
HEATHER WEINGART
ALISON BIBB-CARSON
JEFFREY ISAACS
LORA COVER

SHAKER HEIGHTS BOARD OF EDUCATION