

Testimony on House Bill 99

House Criminal Justice Committee

Submitted by: Mary Anne Crampton

Chair LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 99. My family includes two young granddaughters, a niece who is an administrator at a NEO school district and two school-age nephews in suburban schools. Among other civic roles, I serve as a trustee for a private boys high school in Cleveland. All of these relationships inform my decision to write to you today.

There is no evidence that arming teachers makes our schools safer. Nonetheless, this committee is considering ways to do just that. This bill, HB99, would dismantle existing regulations designed to ensure the safety of students and staff in Ohio schools.

Our state has laws in place that require all armed school employees to complete either an approved basic peace officer training course or have completed 20 years of active duty as a peace officer. Ohio Peace Officer training comprises approximately 728 hours of instruction. House Bill 99 guts the training Ohio law currently requires and would allow teachers to carry loaded handguns in schools with as little as 8 hours of training.

Arming civilians is simply not an effective way to stop an active shooter. Law enforcement officers receive an average of 840 hours of basic training, including 168 hours of training on weapons, self-defense, and the use of force. Even some of the most highly trained law enforcement in the country, the New York City Police Department, see their ability to shoot accurately decrease significantly when engaged in gunfights with perpetrators.¹ How would a teacher with as little as 8 hours of training fare, especially knowing that they themselves would be police targets in an active shooter scenario?

With absolutely no evidence that arming teachers will make Ohio schools safer, I can only conclude that the sponsors of this bill are working with the interests of the gun lobby in mind - not the safety of families who elected you to office.

Surely you are aware that there have been numerous incidents where guns carried into schools were misplaced — guns left in bathrooms, locker rooms and sporting events. There was even an incident where a gun fell out while a teacher did a backflip. There are also multiple incidents where guns were stolen from teachers by students, and cases where guns were misplaced and later found in the hands of students.² With this knowledge how could it possibly be considered a good idea to have guns in schools on a daily basis?

¹ Rostker BD, Hanser LM, Hix WM, et al. Evaluation of the New York City Police Department firearm training and firearm-discharge review process. Rand Corporation. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG717.html>. Published 2008.

² <https://everytownresearch.org/report/arming-teachers-introduces-new-risks-into-schools/>

There are plenty of evidence-based ways to make schools safer!³ Arming teachers is not one. I do not understand! Why are you considering a bill that will make schools LESS SAFE?

With so many resources being expended at the local level to keep citizens safe from Covid-19, it is unconscionable that this week in the Columbus statehouse this committee is considering a bill that holds *no evidence* that it will make Ohioans safer.

If the safety of students, faculty and staff in Ohio schools is truly your intent, HB 99 must be opposed. Please vote “no” on House Bill 99.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Crampton

³ <https://everytownresearch.org/report/a-plan-for-preventing-mass-shootings-and-ending-all-gun-violence-in-american-schools/>