

Testimony on House Bill 99  
House Criminal Justice Committee

Submitted by:  
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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 HB 99, the bill exempting armed teachers in schools from basic peace officer-level training and allowing minimal firearms training. I am a resident of Wooster, Ohio, and I personally can't imagine a more dangerous proposal than to arm teachers or staff in schools, especially with such minimal training as allowed by this proposed legislation. While it may give an impression of creating safety, I believe it actually does the opposite.

As you may already be aware, surveys have shown approximately 73% of teachers, 63% of parents, the National Association of School Resource Officers, and the head of the Major Cities Chief Association are opposed to this type of legislation. So, that is a majority of those who might be asked to carry a firearm, the parents of the students, and law enforcement officers. That would seem to be a strong indicator this isn't welcomed legislation. You claim to support police officers yet, you continue to introduce legislation like HB 99 that law enforcement opposes.

Arming teachers and staff in schools has several significant problems. The first of which is potentially placing teachers and staff in the position of literally shooting their own students (most school shooters are current or past students). Asking someone to shoot another human being by itself is asking much of those people let alone possibly having to shoot their own students. It has been determined that police officers, who have extensive training, may have only a 25-35% accuracy rate when in an actual shooting situation. Asking a "civilian" with little to no training to do this creates a significant potential for missing and actually shooting an innocent bystander. Another potential problem we have seen often in the news, is the armed individual accidentally leaving their firearm somewhere it becomes accessible to students. This by itself can create the situation that is attempting to be averted by arming them in the first place. Lastly, when police do respond to an active shooter call, having an armed teacher or staff member places that teacher or staff member in extreme jeopardy. When police are responding to such a call, they have to treat any armed individual as a potential shooter. This creates a situation where that teacher or staff member could themselves be shot or killed.

Not long after the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, our local school district (Wooster City Schools) held a safety and security community meeting. While an individual brought up the idea of arming teachers, teachers, school administrators, school board members, as well as a school safety expert who was present, all strongly

expressed their opposition to this idea. So, there is at least one school district who does not support this idea.

This bill does nothing to make schools more safe. In fact it does the opposite by adding additional guns to schools carried by teachers or staff who may be inadequately trained to respond while putting themselves in danger. Law enforcement itself opposes it. I respectfully ask you to vote NO on HB 99 and keep schools safer by not encouraging arming inadequately trained teachers or staff.