

Testimony on House Bill 99

House Criminal Justice Committee

April 15, 2021

Submitted by:

Josie Setzler

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 Josie Setzler and I am a parent, grandparent, retired educator, and resident of Fremont, Ohio.

I oppose HB 99 because it is irresponsible to gut safety training for armed employees in Ohio schools.

School employees carrying guns are presumably protecting a large group of people in a public setting. In this sense their role is like law enforcement and should require peace officer training. Certainly, the minimal training that is required of a private citizen protecting his or her own person is not adequate to the armed school employee's public role and responsibility.

If the Ohio legislature wants to arm teachers and staff, then it must ensure that they have full training as peace officers. HB 99 would cut training from approximately 728 hours of instruction to a mere eight hours of concealed carry training, six of which can be completed online. Clearly this level of training is grossly inadequate for the grave responsibility a staff member takes on when he or she carries a gun in school.

The legislators proposing HB 99 seem to assume that guns shoot only bad guys. My own life experience contradicts this. I personally know two families whose young children were accidentally shot to death by another family member. Even the best-intentioned person can accidentally discharge a weapon. When day in and day out, guns travel the halls of our schools or lie tucked away in drawers or bags, they can fall into the wrong hands. Without extensive training, these accidents or thefts are more likely to occur.

I am deeply concerned for my grandchild who attends an Ohio school and for my daughter who is a teacher. Introducing guns into their schools has already increased the risk of gun violence. If the Ohio legislature passes HB 99 and guts the training requirements for employees to carry those guns, then the risk will be greatly magnified. I ask you to protect Ohio's children and reject HB 99.