

Opposition Testimony on House Bill 99

Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by: Jennifer Botimer

To Chairman 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 Jennifer Botimer and I am a preschool teacher and the mother of a young daughter. I live in Jackson Township which is a suburban and rural community near Canton.

I am writing because I strongly oppose HB 99 and Sub Bill HB 99. Allowing civilians to carry guns in schools is dangerous for students and staff. Introducing more guns in schools increases the risk of gun violence, even if accidental. Even though Sub Bill HB 99 now proposes 18 hours of initial general training, 2 hours of handgun training and 8 hrs of training for a concealed carry license (6 hours of which can be completed online), with a couple of hours annual follow-up training, it hardly makes this bill a safe standard for teachers, school staff or community volunteers to be carrying guns in schools. This law specifically says these “authorized persons” are not paid security guards. So what they are is vigilantes who will act as they see fit.

There have been documented instances of guns being discharged by school staff on school grounds and guns being misplaced or stolen and ending up in the hands of students. As an early childhood educator, the safety of our students is of utmost importance to me. There is no evidence that armed security officers in schools increase school safety, let alone armed civilians with very little training. I personally do not feel comfortable with firearms in my classroom, and I know that my students and families feel the same way. As a mother, when my daughter starts kindergarten, I want to know that she will not be spending the day in close contact with poorly trained civilians carrying loaded guns. I strongly urge you to reject HB 99.

Thank you,

Jennifer Botimer

