

Testimony on House Bill 99
Criminal Justice Committee
November 3, 2021

Submitted by:
Abigail Busdeker

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. I am a resident of Cincinnati, a voter and mom of a first grader, third grader and fifth grader.

Our school district has proven that heroes walk amongst us. I am involved in my school district at both the school and the district level. The innovation, thoughtfulness, empathy, and seven-day work weeks show the dedication our administrators and teachers have to their students. They are trying their hardest to support our families, ensure children learn and keep our children safe during Covid.

In the midst of Covid, this legislature has introduced HB99 which drastically cuts training hours for armed teachers. I see but one reason to have this hearing now. Our educators, who would likely vastly oppose this legislation, are too overwhelmed to write their own testimonies for you. Holding this hearing now, is but one more way to limit opposing voices. I feel great disappointment that our democracy is working this way.

A tenured and well-respected superintendent of schools is part of my family. He is against guns in schools with the exception of the school resource officer. He works closely with the County Sheriff to ensure his district has the proper safety precautions in case of an attack. The Sheriff is against armed teachers.

Arming teachers makes situations more chaotic with greater opportunity for loss of life. Arming teachers is already a risky decision. Arming teachers while requiring insufficient training is lunacy.

Who does this legislation benefit? The gun lobby who would receive a financial benefit from this legislation. Who doesn't this legislation benefit? Our children.

As a parent, I want my children to be the beneficiary of state laws. Instead, we are discussing laws that clearly do the opposite. There are many cases of guns falling into students' hands. Three such examples include a student stealing a gun from a teacher's

purse in Arkansas¹ and another in Missouri.² Another occurred in Sparta, Ohio when the transportation director left an unsecured gun for a first grader to find.³ Guns in schools do not make our children safer.

The research is clear that the less children are exposed to guns, the safer they are. I hope you would agree we all want to protect children, so rather than listen to the extreme gun lobby, please look at what data tells us: criminal background checks, red flag laws, safe storage laws, additional physical security upgrades, emergency plans among staff and access to school mental health professionals are the ways to increase safety in schools.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please oppose HB99. An affirmative vote is admission that our children do not matter to you.

Abigail Busdeker

¹ <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2012/jan/17/jacksonville-high-student-steals-gun-teacher/>

² <https://fox2now.com/news/police-find-teachers-stolen-gun-with-student/>

³ <https://www.10tv.com/article/news/local/swept-under-rug-parents-voice-concerns-after-gun-incident-march-highland-local-schools-2019/530-da253dcd-27a5-47fb-8b56-c09cee6c7c8a>