



**TUSCARAWAS COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**ORVIS L. CAMPBELL**  
SHERIFF

2295 Reiser Ave. S.E. | New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663  
Phone: 330-339-2000 | Fax: 330-308-6682

Ohio House of Representatives  
Criminal Justice Committee  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

**Re: Written Proponent testimony to match in person testimony for House Bill 99**

November 2, 2021

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chairman Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland and the entire House Criminal Justice Committee:

I am writing to you and appear before you today in support of HB99. I believe if this bill passes, it will provide greater safety for students, staff and visiting guests at school districts where Boards of Education have evaluated their specific needs and elected to authorize staff members to carry firearms on school grounds.

As an elected Sheriff, I want nothing more than to be able to tell our school districts that law enforcement will be there when they need us. Unfortunately, after having reviewed case studies, our rural county response times and realistic active shooter factors, I just don't think that the typical law enforcement response is enough. I have taken the following points into consideration and concluded that concealed carry staff members should be allowed if deemed necessary by individual school districts.

First, when an active shooter incident begins, we are not necessarily immediately notified. The shooter has typically already brandished a firearm and began firing before anyone at the school is aware there is a threat. We are still not notified because at that point, individuals are too busy running for their lives to call 911. Once a 911 call is placed, the emergency dispatcher must decipher what is happening and where the incident is occurring, only then can they dispatch the appropriate agencies for help. Actual response time for law enforcement now factors in and adds more precious minutes. In Tuscarawas County, a rural county of 572 square miles, response times are often lengthy. Please think about all the elapsed time described in the above scenario and imagine how much damage could be done in a crowded building by a shooter as all that time passes.

Second, many people who oppose staff members carrying firearms do so because they believe law enforcement is more highly trained. The Ohio Peace Officer basic training curriculum only accounts for sixty (60) hours of firearms training to include classroom, shotgun and range time. Personnel of all of the school districts in Tuscarawas County that have elected to have concealed carry staff exceed the training required by peace officers and some more than triple that amount of training. Peace officers in Ohio are

only required to fire twenty-five bullets a year during an annual re-qualification process. Many of the school districts provide ammunition and require monthly shooting by staff members.

Third, having concealed carry staff sprinkled throughout buildings is the best security. Having one public, uniformed School Resource Officer (SRO) only makes that officer or deputy an easy first target to eliminate. Eliminating this easily identifiable SRO then gives the shooter free reign to murder without armed resistance. Truth is, even if I had an armed, uniformed officer in every building, I would welcome augmenting them with highly trained staff.

Lastly, school buildings are designed to control sound. One Ohio school shooting had a law enforcement officer present, who never knew that the incident took place until it was over. The incident continued until other units responded from outside the building. In our own local testing, an assistant prosecutor (now a newly elected Common Pleas Judge) sat in his office while we fired blanks out in the hallway and never identified the sound as gunfire. If anyone thinks the sound of gunfire will be immediately recognized throughout a large building, they would be sorely mistaken. This, of course, translates to a delay in calling 911.

My office has consistently worked with five (5) school districts with regards to concealed carry and provided them with instructional, range, force on force scenarios and repeated "qualifications". These districts have also taken further training from private vendors, some of which we have sent our instructors through to evaluate. We take this responsibility very seriously and do this training at no charge to the district because we believe this is a necessity.

For all the reasons above, and others that I would gladly provide in testimony before any legislative committee. I also believe HB99 would satisfy the needs recently laid out by the Ohio Supreme Court. I urge you to support HB99 so that Ohio Law would allow specific school staff to carry firearms on school grounds.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Orvis L. Campbell", written in a cursive style.

Sheriff Orvis L. Campbell