

Testimony on House Bill 99
House Criminal Justice Committee
Nov., 1, 2021

Submitted by:
Monica Harmon

Dear 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 Monica Harmon. I am an Ohio homeowner, mother of two young children and a pediatric Speech Language Pathologist, employed by Akron Children's. I live in Jackson Township, a conservative suburban neighborhood. I strongly oppose HB 99. I would be very disappointed in our state for allowing our educators, school staff or other community members to wield weapons with minimal training, putting our young people at higher risk for accidents and the potential for weapons to end up in the hands of children.

I believe that most Ohio parents oppose this bill. I understand that when the same concept was presented as SB 317 last year, there were more than 250 opposition testimonies submitted! There were only 2 testimonies supporting that bill, both of which were from paid gun lobbyists. Even with the latest changes made to the bill, parents know that having people with only 28 hours of gun safety training (most of it online!) around our children, all day, every school day, is a terrible idea!

As a Speech Pathologist, I am very concerned that students with learning challenges such as Autism, ADD or Speech/Language and Hearing disorder will be at great risk. They may not understand or react as expected when an adult with a gun yells orders at them. Come to think of it, NO child should have to know how to react in a situation like that. Twenty-eight hours of training is not going to make someone into a trained law enforcement officer who can de-escalate violent situations and make split second life and death decisions. This bill is a nightmare. If an adult is going to be carrying a gun in a school, they should be a Peace Officer with extensive training, as required by current state law.

You must vote No on HB 99.

Thank you,

Monica Harmon