

Testimony on House Bill 99
House Criminal Justice Committee

Submitted by:
Mimi Karon

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 Sub HB 99. My name is Mimi Karon and I am very concerned about this legislation.

If the goal of HB99 is to keep Ohio's children safer, it is going to fall very short: research is clear that children are less safe with a gun around.

I became involved in Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America because after expecting our government to pass legislation to keep our children safe from school shootings in the nearly 20 years between Columbine and Marjory Stoneman Douglas in Parkland, Florida, nothing was done to effectively do this. No background checks, no red flag laws, no increased budgets for more mental health professionals to address kids identified as at risk, not nearly the physical upgrades to make our schools safer. Your constituents want children safe. And if they think it's going to be done by more guns, it's actually your job to let them know that this is simply not true. And it's supported by data and research. Not opinion. And, the truth is, if a designated person does want to be armed there are already steps they can take to do just this.

Unintentional shootings occur every day in our country. Children have enough stress in their day, and there are many who have been traumatized by gun violence. They should not be concerned about whether their teacher who participated in firearm training will be adept at carrying it around him or her. We cannot expect our students to be able to focus on school knowing an unintentional shooting is now a real threat to be faced with. I know I certainly wouldn't be able to concentrate on my school work in this situation. Guns go off, they misfire, especially if their owner doesn't know how to properly care for and maintain their weapon. We are adding a whole new problem with diminished training and this is simply a wrong and deadly path we are going down with this legislation.

I also know that gun theft is a big problem. In fifth grade up, all of the students in my grade were well aware which teachers smoked cigarettes and where they hid their cigarettes. And that was in the seventies. Kids today are so much more aware, so much savvier, so it's possible students may also identify the teachers who carry firearms, figure out where they've stored them and decide to steal them. And there have been incidents where firearms have disappeared when teachers are focused on other things.

Like teaching. Education is an already taxing, underpaid career. Now we are going to add to their list, keeping students and staff safe around firearms to their already long list of worries.

Finally, the ability to handle an active shooter situation is incredibly stressful and even the best marksmen are going to miss their shots. And in a classroom, missing a shot means hitting another student or school community member. Police officers miss targets. Who actually believes a teacher in a classroom is going to have the opportunity to properly aim and hit the target, especially without taking someone else (at least) along with the shooter. Guns do not belong in schools. Everyone's children in this room and outside of it deserves to have their teachers focus on education and caring for children as they are educated (and chose this career) to do. It is all of your jobs to pass legislation that will enable this. And this dangerous piece of legislation that increases funds for those in the line of work that sell weapons and train those carrying them is putting our kids in harm's way. I ask that you oppose sub HB99. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today.