

House Criminal Justice Committee
Opposition Testimony Sub Bill HB 99
Who May Carry Guns In Schools
Submitted by: Patricia Krummrich
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Chair LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to address this committee. My name is Pat Krummrich and I strongly oppose HB 99.

There is an alarming trend toward Vigilantism in this country. This bill would “authorize” inadequately trained individuals from the community to concealed carry dangerous loaded weapons among our children. The bill specifies that they will not be security guards. So what are they doing there? Just showing off their guns? Who do they report to? Who controls their behavior? Basically, they will be armed vigilantes who will make their own decisions whether to shoot and kill a child, teacher or parent in a school. The images of Kyle Rittenhouse, Jan. 6th insurrectionists and Texas citizens who are currently empowered to “enforce” abortion laws is a dangerous and slippery slope. Yet this bill would propose that we do just that with our children’s lives.

Both the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association oppose arming teachers in schools.[1, 2] When a very similar bill, SB 317 was proposed last year, concerned Ohioans submitted more than 250 testimonies in opposition. The total testimonies for the Proponents? Two, both by paid gun lobbyists. Earlier this year, you proposed HB 99 and again, Ohioans let you know the intensity of their opposition. The latest proposal, Sub Bill HB 99 appears to try to address public opposition by doing several things: 1) adding a few more hours of training for these “authorized persons”, 2) having the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission make recommendations regarding such training and 3) deleting all mention of teachers or school staff and refer only to “persons authorized by School Boards”. Let’s see how well this legislation took care of these issues.

Adding a few hours of training:

HB 99 started out with the requirement of 8 hours of training (only 2 of which involved live firing). 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). There are also 2-4 hours of follow-up training annually. Although, we appreciate that you recognize that Ohio's parents will not accept inadequately trained adults carrying loaded deadly weapons around our children, the difference between 8 hours of training and 28 hours does not transform this bill into a safe standard for teachers or school staff to be carrying guns in schools. Even the New York City Police Dep't. reported that their highly trained officers see their shooting accuracy decrease significantly in stressful shooting situations.[3] A community volunteer or school employee with a few hours training is more likely to hit an innocent student or staff member than to be able to "take out" a school shooter. They will not have enough training to make safe, split second, life and death decisions. A recent study by two researcher from University of Notre Dame and Purdue University found that people who are armed are more likely to think that the object in another person's hand (a cell phone?) is a gun. [4] It takes a lot of training to overcome that bias. When you consider that current Ohio law requires that people going armed in schools must be "Peace Officers" and have 700+ hours of OPOTC training, 28 hours seems dangerous and insignificant. "The idea that anybody can go to Joe Smith's School of Shooting for a day or a week and become proficient at shooting a handgun in a life-and-death situation is a little bit absurd," said Doug Tangen, firearms program manager at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, the state police academy.

Although school shootings are terrifying, they are actually only a small percentage (about 1%) of child shootings in our country.[5] Of course we want to stop the tragedy of school shootings but there is no evidence that poorly trained civilians are effective in stopping an armed shooter situation. On the other hand, according to the Gifford Law Center, there have been more than 90 publicly reported instances of mishandled guns at schools in which staff accidentally fired their guns or allowed their gun to fall into the hands of a student, sometimes resulting in severe injury to staff or students.[6] This bill will create more dangerous situations than it resolves.

Having OPOTC recommend "rules" for training but then **immediately limiting** these "rules " to dangerously low standards of training:

Involving the OPOTC is a positive thing, since they currently train Ohio's Peace Officers, but this is an exercise in "Smoke and Mirrors". After proscribing these powers to OPOTC, Sub Bill HB 99 immediately dictates that the **"training cannot exceed"** 18 hrs general training + 2 hrs live training and 4 hours of annual follow-up training. (see OLSC Analysis of Sub. H.B. 99 (I_134_0593-12). Ohio voters see what you're doing here.

Deleting mention of teachers or school staff:

Sub Bill HB 99 does not exclude teachers or school staff from being designated by School Boards as "persons authorized" to carry arms in school safety zones, it simply avoids mentioning them. So in many schools, this bill will result in teachers carrying guns in schools with minimal training, something parents and educators have made clear they strongly disapprove of. Parents will have no legal recourse to find out whether teachers are carrying loaded weapons since the bill simply requires schools to notify parents that " the board or governing body has authorized one or more persons to go armed within a school..."

There are several other important issues to consider with this bill.

Sub Bill HB 99 is especially dangerous for students of color and students with disabilities:

In this time of racial tension, when even well trained police are under tremendous strain, trying to do their job but also trying to be fair to students of all color and religions. Black students make up about 16% of America's student population but they experience school shootings at twice that rate. [7] Black and brown Americans are 5 x more likely to be shot by police than white Americans. A 2005 University of Colorado study found that subjects reacting to a potentially armed person would move to shoot black individuals faster and more often than whites.[7] Will minimally trained "persons" be adequately equipped, with just a few days training, to make fair life and death judgements about when to kill a child? Who will be the students most at risk in of being shot by these quasi law enforcement persons? Brown and black students. The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) of 2013-2014 documented that black students, who make up 16 percent of enrollment, accounted for 40 percent of suspensions nationally, which suggests that arming people in schools could make an already difficult environment much more dangerous for students of color.[7, 8]

Additionally, students with learning or behavioral differences such as Autism, ADD or Speech/Language and Hearing disabilities will be at great risk. They may not understand or respond typically when an armed person yells at them to “Stop!” or “Lie down”! Teenagers fight sometimes, that’s what they do. They don’t deserve to be shot for it. Twenty hours of training is not going to transform someone from a well- intentioned volunteer into a trained law enforcement officer who can de-escalate chaotic situations and make fair, split second life and death decisions. I shudder to think of one of these “persons” firing into a crowd of running, screaming children.

This bill serves the demands of the NRA, Ohio Buckeye Firearms and other gun lobbyists in Ohio:

It is not surprising that the program outlined in Sub Bill 99 is basically the same as Buckeye Firearms’ “Faster” training program.

Proponents of the bill will point to the fact that the bill allows school districts to require additional training. The bill also provides that School Boards must pay for all training of these “authorized persons”. As a result, we must expect that many School Boards will choose the cheapest, easiest way to arm persons in schools. They will go with the lowest standard for training set by state law. Sub Bill HB 99 will give them cover when parents challenge the school’s gun policy. They can just answer, “Our policy meets state standards”. The result will be more loaded guns in close proximity to our children and our teachers. Every family in Ohio, regardless of what school district they live in, should be able to trust that IF there are going to be armed personnel in schools, they should be fully trained peace officers, not a teacher or some other adult from the community with only a few hours of training, most of which is online.

Finally, this bill is expressly politically motivated:

HB 99 is not evidence based nor is it designed to save children’s lives; it is an attempt to overrule a court decision. The General Assembly states in HB99 “that the purpose of the provisions is to expressly overrule the decision of the Ohio Supreme Court in Gabbard v. Madison Local School Dist. Bd. of Edn. (R.C. 109.78(E).) In this recent case, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of parents who sued their Ohio school district for arming teachers or other personnel in their school without adequate training.

Please listen to Ohio parents and vote NO on HB 99!

Thank you for your attention,
Pat Krummrich

1. AFT. Call On Lawmakers To Adopt Proven Strategies To Make American Schools Safer. Release: Monday, February 11, 2019
2. "AFT, NEA: Arming Teachers Won't Keep Schools Safe, Dec. 20, 2012, available at: <http://www.nea.org/home/53943.htm>
- 3 Rostker BD, Hanser LM, Hix WM, et al. Evaluation of the New York City Police Department firearm training and firearm discharge review process. Rand Corporation. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG717.html>. Published 2008
4. Brokemole J, Witt J. Journal of Experimental Psychology. Cited at <https://www.minnpost.com> 2012/03
5. Children/teenage deaths: CDC, WONDER, 5 year average 2015-2019 ages 0-19. Cited by EveryStat.org, updated Jan., 2021.
6. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/report/every-incident-of-mishandled-guns-in-schools/> Last updated SEPTEMBER 8, 2021.
7. **The latest school safety proposals ignore the experiences of students of color**
Why calls to arm teachers have been met with fear in black and brown communities.
By [P.R. Lockhart](#), VOX, Mar 2, 2018, 1:50pm EST
8. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/disproportionality-in-student-discipline-connecting-policy-to-research/>