

Criminal Justice Committee
Opposition Testimony for House Bill 99

Steve McCarren

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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 House Bill 99.

I am a long time resident of a lovely suburban/rural community in Stark County and the father of 2 boys. As a physician, I have to make evidence-based decisions to save lives. I am strongly against HB 99.

The idea that more “good guys with guns” will stop “bad guys” with guns is a myth. Research shows that more guns in schools will result in more gun violence around our children. Boston University’s School of Community Health Sciences, studied this question and found that “states with higher levels of gun ownership have disproportionately large numbers of deaths from firearm-related homicides.” (LiveSciences). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has stated that “the safest home for a child is one without a gun”. So it follows that the safest school for a child is a school without guns.

I am very concerned that the Ohio Legislature seems to be very responsive to the NRA, Buckeye Firearms and other gun lobby groups. I’m aware that last week, during a hearing in the Government Oversight Committee, a gun lobbyist from Arizona was allowed to speak in support of Permitless Carry, even though Ohio citizens had been notified that they would NOT be allowed to testify. Now with HB 99, you are proposing a shortcut program of training (28 hours) that is suspiciously similar to the “FASTER” program that Ohio Buckeye Firearms Assoc. sells. On the other hand, Ohio voters have been asking you for Universal Background Checks and Red Flag Laws for several years but you do nothing on those bills.

If a community feels it has to have armed officers on school grounds, they should have the extensive training that current Ohio Law requires of “Peace Officers”. HB 99 would reduce that training to 28 hours (much of which could be completed online) and a few hours of annual re-training. There is

no way a civilian can become qualified to handle a gun, shoot accurately and make life and death decisions with this “shortcut” training, especially in crises situations.

Please follow the evidence. Vote No on HB 99.

Thank you,

Steve McCarren