

Testimony on House Bill 99 Criminal Justice Committee  
Date: Nov. 4, 2021  
Submitted by Ariel Miller

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 HB 99. I'm the grandmother of two little girls in elementary school in Anderson Township. I am shocked that you continue to consider this bill that would allow schools to arm staff with only a few hours of safety training. I think you must be under incredible pressure from a few vocal voters who see gun rights as the pinnacle of constitutional freedoms.

Why is that right greater than any other, and why are you bending under the pressure to take away the responsibility to not endanger others in the exercise of this right? How can you consider letting Ohioans bring a lethal weapon into a school without requiring rigorous training and certification, when the State rightly requires responsibility of people who want to exercise other rights, such as passing a driving test and showing proof of insurance before getting a license to drive a giant metal projectile on the streets and highways of our state? These responsibilities protect the rest of us from harm and loss.

A big, big group of parents, grandparents, and teachers in Ohio share your concern for children's safety in schools and we want to support and protect you in choosing policies that keep them safer. I have written to you many times over the past year and a half about what our parish learned from the Wyoming, Ohio police chief about how difficult it is even for highly experienced veterans of the police and armed forces to shoot accurately in a dynamic situation like an active shooter attack.

I don't think you would want a doctor doing surgery or a nurse caring for an ICU patient without rigorous hands-on training and passing the state licensing exam for their profession. Why would you allow someone without much training to carry a loaded weapon in a school?

Please tell me what I can do to support you in resisting the pressure to pass this terrible bill. Ohio law already allows schools to arm staff, but requires basic peace officer training. That's fine. It isn't broken. Please don't introduce a deadly combination to our schools: more weapons in the hands of people ill-equipped to use them safely.

The National Association of School Resource Officers strongly opposes proposals to arm teachers because of the risks to children and school staff.

I don't want you to wake up to the news that a teacher has killed a student, or wounded another innocent person, or that a student has picked up a gun that has then gone off and wounded or killed another child. That's a nightmare you will never wake up from. Don't pass this bill. I am praying for you to have the fortitude to just say no.

Sincerely,  
Ariel Miller