

Opponent Testimony on House Bill 99

Criminal Justice Committee

Submitted by: Wendy Oldaker

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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 resident, homeowner and voter in Stark County, Ohio. No one has more concern for the safety of Ohio's students than Ohio's parents and teachers themselves. But the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association both oppose arming teachers in schools. (2) The US government's chief legal, educational and law enforcement agencies all find that arming civilians in schools is "not a safe security practice". (3) Putting those guns in the hands of civilians with just a few hours of gun training, as HB 99 would do, only increases the risk of shooting deaths and injuries in our schools.

Students of color and students with disabilities will be particularly at risk of being shot by an inadequately trained, vigilante type, quasi-school guard. 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 shoot black individuals faster and more often than whites.[7] Students with behavioral challenges or learning disorders such as Autism, ADD or Speech and Hearing disabilities will also be at great risk. They may not understand or obey when an armed adult points a gun at them and screams orders to them. When teenage boys roughhouse while holding a cell phone, a minimally trained "authorized person" may think the phone is a gun and shoot them. Similar tragedies have already occurred.[10] There is no evidence that you can acquire the type of judgement required for these situations in 28 hours.

If some schools DO decide to have armed officers in schools, they should have extensive training similar to the Peace Officer training required by

current Ohio law. Reducing this training to just 28 hours with just a few hrs. of active shooting time is ridiculous. And dangerous.

I urge you to reject HB 99.

Thank you,
Wendy Oldaker

References

1 See ORC Ann. 109.78(D).

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