

**Ohio Conference National Association for the Advancement of Colored People THE OHIO
STATE CONFERENCE OF BRANCHES OF THE NAACP**

Attention: Criminal Justice Committee

Mr. Chairman,

My name is Tom Roberts, and I am testifying in opposition to Substitute House Bill 99 in my individual capacity. I feel compelled to submit this testimony as the President of the Ohio Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and as someone devoted to the advancement and protection the safety of Black Ohioans—including our school children.

In my opinion, this bill will make Black Ohio school children *less safe* because it allows teachers to go armed at school with insufficient training and does not account for the danger posed by implicit bias.

The NAACP was founded in 1909 and is the oldest, largest, and most widely respected civil rights organization in the county. As a bipartisan, civil rights membership organization, throughout its history, the NAACP has stood firm in its commitment to addressing issues involving racial discrimination and disparate treatment in employment, housing, civic engagement, education, and police relations.

This Committee must recognize the safety risk that arming teachers and other school staff poses to Black children. Black children are often perceived as being more suspicious, threatening, and dangerous than people of other races. And Black students face harsh school disciplinary policies more frequently than other children.

Arming teachers and other school staff increases the risk that Black children will incorrectly be seen as a threat and will fall victim to an unauthorized use of deadly force based on racial prejudice, racial hatred, and racial perceptions.

Any legislation allowing for teachers and other staff to be armed at school must include implicit bias training, but more importantly, the NAACP urges our legislators to not continue down the path of introducing more and more legislation that increases the presence of firearms in our lives, but instead to consider comprehensive gun safety laws which would make our community safer.

Thank you.

Tom Roberts
President
Ohio State Conference NAACP