

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

PLEASE COMPLETE THE WITNESS INFORMATION FORM BEFORE TESTIFYING

DATE: June 13, 2021

NAME: Kathryn Knue Przywara

ORGANIZATION: _____

(IF APPLICABLE)

POSITION/TITLE: _____

ADDRESS: 8652 Calumet Way

CITY: Cincinnati STATE: OH ZIP: 45249

TELEPHONE: (513) 325-5615

ARE YOU REPRESENTING: YOURSELF ORGANIZATION _____

DO YOU WISH TO TESTIFY ON

LEGISLATION (BILL NUMBER): SB 168

SPECIFIC ISSUE: _____

SUBJECT MATTER: _____

ARE YOU A REGISTERED LOBBYIST? YES ___ NO

DO YOU FAVOR _____ OR OPPOSE THE ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION REGARDING THIS ISSUE?

WILL YOU HAVE A WRITTEN STATEMENT, VISUAL AIDS, OR OTHER MATERIAL TO DISTRIBUTE?

YES NO _____

(IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES TO THE CHAIRMAN OR SECRETARY)

See written statement below.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL YOUR TESTIMONY REQUIRE? Statement provided in writing

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE GROUNDS ON WHICH YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE SUCH ENACTMENT **See Attached.**

Testimony on Senate Bill 168
Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Submitted by:
Kathryn Knue Przywara

Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to SB 168. My name is Kathryn Knue Przywara. I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and I have lived in the Montgomery/Symmes Township area since 1988. My husband and I raised our two sons in Ohio and they are the products of Ohio public schools. We are the proud grandparents of two grandsons. My oldest son is a teacher who began his teaching career in Ohio at Sycamore High School. My mom is retired, having taught for years in the Lakota Local School District here in Ohio. I am a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and the Maurer School of Law at Indiana University (Bloomington). I am currently licensed to practice law in Ohio and the District of Columbia. After practicing law for about 35 years, I retired at the end of 2019.

I am strongly opposed to Ohio SB 168. The proposed bill essentially exempts school safety designees (including teachers or others) from the peace officer training requirement in ORC 109.78. The bill only requires that the designee have “basic firearms training” from an “Ohio mobile training team.” The amount of training is not specified in the bill. In other words, this bill would allow individuals with what appears to be only minimal training to carry loaded weapons in Ohio schools. I am opposed to the bill for a number of reasons.

First, there is no evidence to suggest that Ohio parents, teachers or students want armed teachers or other staff in our schools. Indeed, teachers in general overwhelmingly oppose arming teachers in schools. See “New NEA national survey: educators overwhelmingly reject proposals to arm teachers,” March 13, 2018 News Release, *nea.org*. I have spoken to my son at length many times about this issue. He told me that if teachers were permitted to carry guns in schools, he would likely find another line of work.

In fact, guns in the hands of adults in schools are frequently mishandled. See Drane, Kelly, “Every Incident of Mishandled Guns in Schools,” <https://giffords.org/blog/2020/03/every-incident-of-mishandled-guns-in-schools-blog/>, Giffords: Courage to Fight Gun Violence, posted March 2, 2020, accessed July 18, 2020. The presence of loaded firearms on school grounds, particularly in the hands of inadequately trained individuals, would only increase the risk that children will have access to the weapon. Do not underestimate this fact – some students will know which individuals have the guns and how to disarm them. Imagine a teacher with a gun breaking up the inevitable fight among high school students. How easy would it be for one of the students to disarm the teacher during a scuffle? Guns stored in locked

drawers and cabinets can also be the targets of theft. We are all aware of instances where money and other items of value are stolen from student lockers and teachers' locked drawers. And, as we have unfortunately seen in Ohio, first grade students at an elementary school near Columbus were able to find a gun used as part of a concealed carry program intended to protect students and remove the gun from its unlocked case. See <https://www.dispatch.com/news/20190816/first-graders-had-access-to-gun-meant-to-prevent-school-violence> (August 16, 2019).

There is also no evidence that arming teachers or staff would actually address the problem of guns and gun violence in our schools. The proposed bill is not based on any input from the Ohio Peace Officers Training Commission, the Ohio School Resource Officer Association or the Ohio School Safety Center as to whether the proposed bill is a good idea, and even assuming that it was, how much and what type of training would adequately train these individuals. The bill in its current format only refers to "basic firearms training" requirements to be determined at a later time. There is no specified framework for what those requirements would be and whether they would include anything more than training someone to brandish and potentially use a firearm. In short, the proposed bill in its current state is vague.

Even if you were to ignore overwhelming opposition and school boards were able to authorize the arming of teachers or other designees with only basic firearms training, the school boards' decisions should be required to be made public. Moreover, they should be required to advise parents whether their child's teacher will be carrying a firearm, that a firearm will be present in their child's classroom and what level of firearms and other training that individual has. Parents must be able to assess whether they want their child in that classroom or in that school.

Like all of you, I want Ohio school children and teachers to be safe. However, more, not less training of professional peace officers is the answer, not guns in the hands of teachers and other unqualified individuals with only "basic firearms training". Thank you for considering my letter. I strongly urge you and the other members of your committee to discontinue hearings on Ohio S.B. 168.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Knue Przywara