

SB 168 Opposition Testimony

Revised 6/14/2021

Submitted by:

Patricia Krummrich

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas and Committee Members.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee. My name is Pat Krummrich. I am also a retired Pediatric Speech Pathologist from Akron Children's, a teacher and high school volleyball coach. I live in the Jackson Local School District (a suburban and rural area) where our community endured the trauma of a student planning a school shooting and then shooting himself in the school bathroom. I oppose SB 168.

This bill is working toward the same goal as HB 99 which is to put more guns in the presence of our children in schools. Sen. Hoagland, I applaud the fact that you appeared to have recognized from the start that arming teachers with 8 hours of training, as proposed in previous bills, conducted by some outside group (like the Faster Program) is a dangerous idea. However, SB 168 has not solved several major problems and therefore, should not pass from committee.

Firstly, this bill puts the "cart before the horse" by not telling us how many hours of training would end up being required by the State Att'y General. You are asking parents to "trust you" on this but we do not wish to trust our children's lives to the unknown. In this bill, the number of hours of training recommended by POTA, to be approved by the State Attorney General as well as the subjects covered in the curriculum remain a mystery to parents at least until the bill is already passed. In the end, it could end up being a small number of hours or a weekend of training, we simply do not know.

Secondly, the assumption that military veterans are naturally a good choice for school safety designees concerns me. No one has more respect for the military than I do, having lost both of my brothers as a result of their military service. But there are many non-military concepts to be studied and mastered before being given life and death authority over a child: child development, adolescent and child behavior, de-escalation, racial bias, childhood disabilities, etc. My younger brother took his own life last May as a result of the PTSD he developed when serving in a Forward Operations

Base in Afganistan. Veterans are at high risk of suicide. Military training is far different than School Security training should be.

Thirdly, and most importantly, this bill may actually encourage more schools to arm teachers and volunteers, effectively putting MORE guns in classrooms around our children. School shootings are a focus of media attention and raise awareness about firearm deaths among children and teens. But school shootings remain the smallest proportion of gun deaths nationwide, accounting for 1.2% of all homicides among 5 to 18-year-olds. In Ohio, an average of 113 children and teens die by guns every year, and 63% of these deaths are homicides. Another 38% of firearm-related deaths in this age group are suicides, while the rest are accidental shootings or undetermined causes. We all want to stop the tragedy of school shootings. But there is no evidence that poorly trained civilians are effective in stopping an armed shooter situation. On the other hand, there have been more than 90 publicly reported incidents of mishandled guns at schools in the last five years, including instances where staff accidentally discharged their guns, sometimes injuring themselves or children, or have allowed their gun to fall into the hands of a student.

I am a gun violence survivor and a bereaved parent, having lost my beautiful daughter when she was 15. This is a journey you do not want to put someone through. Yet if you pass this bill, you may do just that.

I am also a retired Pediatric Speech Pathologist from Akron Children's, a teacher and high school volleyball coach. I live in the Jackson Local School District (a suburban and rural area) where our community endured the trauma of a student planning a school shooting and then shooting himself in the school bathroom.

Ohio's voters are trying to tell you something. Many of them do not want guns in our schools. Please vote NO on SB 168.

Respectfully,
Pat Krummrich