



# OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*State Representative Thomas Hall*

**Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee**  
**March 29th, 2022**  
**Sponsor Testimony HB 99**

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, ranking member Thomas, and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 99, legislation aimed at allowing staff to be armed within a school safety zone to protect students and their colleagues alike. This crucial legislation will without a doubt be the most important legislation I will work on this general assembly.

I will never forget the phone call I received from my mother on February 29, 2016. I will always remember the sinking feeling I had when she told me that my very own alma mater where my father served as the school's sole resource officer, Madison High School, experienced a school shooting.

While we were extremely blessed that no one died as a result of the shooting, and our local first responders were able to arrest the offender, the lives of so many families, including my own, throughout our community will forever be changed.

After that day, Madison School District took many steps to enhance their school safety. Most notably, the district permitted certain teachers/staff in the school to be armed for protection purposes.

Madison's policy for arming school personnel eventually ended up in Ohio Supreme Court. The court found that based off of the way the ORC is written, requirements for armed staff members is over 750 hours of Ohio Peace Officer Training. It is worth noting that prior to that decision, the required training hours for school staff was zero.



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750+ hours is not a realistic or practical requirement for full time staff to complete in order to simply keep our students and educators safe. This is why I am here today with House Bill 99.

It is no secret that the initial bill idea was first considered by this same body last GA with SB 317. A bill that was voted on more than once by some of you on this committee. The main difference between this bill and SB 317 is that we have added a minimum but not a maximum amount of training that must be completed prior to school staff carrying. It is also important to note that this bill is permissive, it is NOT a mandate for schools to utilize this practice.

I am not here to argue whether or not guns should be in schools. I am here to help clarify a gray area of law that will give schools the tools to protect their students if they wish to utilize them.

Currently, after 6 hearings in the House Criminal Justice committee, we are on version 12 of House Bill 99. We have thoroughly vetted this bill for well over a year, with countless meetings listening to proponents, opponents, and interested parties.

After the multiple meetings, we have established three main components of this bill:

- One, we have established a minimum training requirement, but again, NOT a maximum, which allows for local control for schools to require as much training as they see fit. At minimum under the bill, a school employee must complete concealed carry weapon (CCW) training in order to carry a firearm on school premises, as well as 20 initial hours of training and 4 reoccurring hours of training. This training will be set forth by the Attorney General's office.



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- Two, to address training concerns, staff members must undergo and meet certain range requirements. These requirements must be met by staff prior to being able to carry.
- And three, this bill requires transparency. The bill requires that if a school board decides to allow staff to carry, the board must notify the public by whatever means that they normally communicate with the public.

At the end of the day, what we are talking about here is empowering our local schools to make the best decision for their students and educators so that our children feel safe and are safe in Ohio schools. We have worked tirelessly on this bill to do our part in protecting our schools and our communities.

I want to give credit where credit is due with this bill. As we heard lots of testimony in the House, Chairman LaRe, Majority Leader Seitz, former Montgomery County Sheriff and Representative Phil Plummer, amongst others played a large part in getting this bill over to the Senate for consideration today. This bill has also gained the support from the Buckeye State Sheriff Association. I am proud of the piece of legislation that is before you today because of the collective effort it has taken to get here. With 32 co-sponsors, this vital legislation is much needed for schools like Madison in my district, but also, schools all across our great state.

Mr. Chairman, members of this committee, thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 99, I would be happy to take any questions at this time.