

Testimony on House Bill 99
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee
May 30, 2021

Submitted by:
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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 HB 99. I am a resident of Cincinnati, a voter and mom of a first grader, third grader and fifth grader.

Our school district has proven that heroes walk amongst us. I am involved in my school district at both the school and the district level. The innovation, thoughtfulness, empathy, and seven-day work weeks show the dedication our administrators and teachers have to their students. They are trying their hardest to support our families, ensure children learn and keep our children safe during these last two years of Covid.

This bill's answer to stopping a person from taking an AR-15 and slaughtering innocents is to arm teachers with 22 hours of training.

Please read that again.

I am a gun owner and very well know that 22 hours of training is almost no training at all. It is a joke. For those with military experience or serve in local law enforcement, they too know that 22 hours of training is pathetic. Law enforcement officers receive an average of **840** hours of basic training including 168 hours of training on weapons, self-defense, and the use of force.¹

My father-in-law was a tenured and well-respected superintendent of schools. He unexpectedly passed this winter but he was against guns in schools with the exception of the school resource officer. He worked closely with the County Sheriff to ensure his district had the proper safety precautions in case of an attack. The Sheriff is against armed teachers.

Arming teachers makes situations more chaotic with greater opportunity for loss of life. Arming teachers is already a risky decision.

¹ Reaves BA. State and local law enforcement training academies, 2013. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. July 2016. <https://bit.ly/2pg0whl>.

Arming teachers while requiring insufficient training is lunacy.

Who does this legislation benefit? The gun lobby, that created this short training program, and will receive a significant financial benefit from this legislation.

Who doesn't this legislation benefit? Our children.

As a parent, I want my children to be the beneficiary of state laws. Instead, we are discussing laws that clearly do the opposite. There are many cases of guns falling into students' hands. Three such examples include a student stealing a gun from a teacher's purse in Arkansas² and another in Missouri.³ Another occurred in Sparta, Ohio when the transportation director left an unsecured gun for a first grader to find.⁴ Guns in schools do not make our children safer.

The research is clear that the less children are exposed to guns, the safer they are. I hope you would agree we all want to protect children, so rather than listen to the extreme gun lobby, please look at what data tells us: criminal background checks, red flag laws, safe storage laws, additional physical security upgrades, emergency plans among staff and access to school mental health professionals are the ways to increase safety in schools.

<https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-our-schools-safe-a-plan-to-stop-mass-shootings-and-end-all-gun-violence-in-american-schools/>

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please oppose HB99. An affirmative vote is admission that our children do not matter to you but the gun lobby does.

Abigail Jansen Busdeker

² <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2012/jan/17/jacksonville-high-student-steals-gun-teacher/>

³ <https://fox2now.com/news/police-find-teachers-stolen-gun-with-student/>

⁴ <https://www.10tv.com/article/news/local/swept-under-rug-parents-voice-concerns-after-gun-incident-march-highland-local-schools-2019/530-da253dcd-27a5-47fb-8b56-c09cee6c7c8a>