

Testimony on Sub.House Bill 99
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee
May 31,2022
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 Sub.HB99. My name is Andrea Kovessi and I am a very concerned lifelong resident of Northeast Ohio.

If the purpose of HB99 is to ensure the safety of Ohio's school children, it completely misses the mark. First of all, the fact that our children need armed "guards" in their schools should be of major concern to everyone whether or not they have children in our schools. What kind of society sends its children to school knowing that they may come face to face with a "school-shooter"?

When it comes to preventing another senseless and tragic school shooting, HB99 doesn't even attempt to address the real problems faced by school administrators across Ohio. It is a mere "band-aid" that lives solely on the hope that a "good guy with a gun" will be able to save the day if and when an armed perpetrator enters school grounds with the intent to maim and/or kill innocent school children. The fact of the matter is this is real life-not a Lifetime movie-and in real life it is "...unrealistic to believe that a teacher would be able to protect their students, neutralize a shooter and not be a risk to themselves or their students" Keeping our Schools Safe, Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2021

In addition, most U.S. teachers are opposed to carrying guns in school. [Gallup. March 16, 2018. https://bit.ly/2MPTRV5](https://bit.ly/2MPTRV5). However, in the circumstance where teachers or other school personnel are authorized to be armed at school, it only makes sense that they are given the utmost extensive training before bringing a loaded firearm into the classroom where children as young as 5 years old go to learn under the care of those teachers.

It has been one week since 19 elementary school children and 2 of their teachers were murdered in their classroom. The children's bodies were literally "shredded" to the point where DNA swabs had to be taken from parents in order to identify their dead children. Think about that. In what I've been told many times in my 56 years is the greatest country on Earth. 19, eight, nine and ten year olds were "shredded" beyond recognition. Their teachers weren't armed but the 19 law enforcement officers that stood in the hallway outside the classroom for nearly an hour were.

The Uvalde School District officers had just undergone active shooter training in March. Those officers failed to use the training that they had received just 2 months before an 18 year old (LEGALLY armed as if he were on the battlefield) walked in through an unlocked door and took 21 innocent lives. As you all know, the job of a police officer is to serve and PROTECT the public within his or her jurisdiction. The job of a teacher is to teach and mentor the young people that he or she is entrusted with each day. On average, police officers receive over 800 hours of training and that isn't always enough, especially when they are outgunned by an active shooter wearing body armor. There is no way that 22 hours of training is enough for teachers who are trained to teach not to defend their students from an armed gunman.

There are steps that can be taken to prevent another school shooting. Steps such as passing Extreme Risk Protection Orders as in SB138, a bipartisan bill that sits idly by while this body continues to look for ways to put more guns in the hands of more people (many of whom should not be entrusted with a potentially lethal weapon).

There are thoughtful and insightful ways to prevent gun violence. HB99 is not one of them. Please stop this bill from going any further.