

**Testimony on House Bill 99
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee**

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 here not as one constituent talking to my politicians, but as one parent and grandparent talking to you as parents and grandparents.

This past weekend, my daughter took her one year old daughter to the Upper Arlington swimming pool. There she overheard 7 and 8 year old kids talking with one another. The topic of their conversation was not games, or toys, or birthday parties, but it was about what they would do if a shooter came to their school. It struck me that we have failed our kids. Is this the America we want our young kids to live in during their most formative years? I am sure the universal answer we will get from virtually everyone is “no.”

Since we all agree on the problem, why can we not come up with solutions in a rational, data-based manner? Why can we not do what companies and businesses do all the time to solve problems—generate the data needed, think of all potential solutions, and then make informed decisions? One reason is that our federal legislature bans the government from doing any research on understanding gun violence. Most of the existing data is from universities and other non-profit organizations.

Special interests and massive campaign contributions have become way too pervasive in our politics. In many dictatorial countries and some third world countries, bribery and corruption, though illegal, are rampant. Fortunately, our country does not have significant illegal bribery and corruption. However, special interests, with their large, and at times covert, contributions, have a disproportionate impact on legislations that get passed. That is why after Sandy Hook, where over 20 first graders were gunned down by one mass shooter with a semi-automatic rifle, our country could not even pass Universal Background Check, even though 90% of the people were in favor of such a legislation!

Reforming campaign finance laws is a topic of discussion at a future time. **For now, I implore you to disregard the special interests at least on this issue, and do what is truly best for our children. Our children deserve nothing less.**

I urge you to look closely at the existing data on gun violence in schools--from several sources including the NRA--before you reach your decision.

I use these two measures to gauge whether any significant decision I make is truly right or not. First, I listen to my inner conscience because it never lies to me. Second, I think

about what I would tell my grandchildren and great grandchildren when they ask me decades from now what I did to help solve the gun violence problem in our schools.

Let me talk specifically about HB 99 now. After the shooting in Uvalde, I asked myself, "If the teacher there was armed, would this tragedy have been prevented?" The answer I came to was "no." I would even go as far as to say that even if this teacher was an ex-Delta Force member, she would have been no match to a gunman walking in with an AK-47, especially since this teacher would likely not be carrying the handgun in her hand while teaching the class.

It may be OK to have some trained cops in the building, whose most important job is security. **However, arming teachers with minimal training is not a good idea**, since their primary job is teaching. It is unfair to put the additional burden on our teachers of protecting our children as well teaching them. This will likely result in teachers quitting, which will make the teacher shortage issues in schools even worse than what it is today.

Once again, I urge you to put politics aside, at least on this issue which deals with our most innocent, young children, and do what you truly believe is in their best interest.

Respectfully,

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