

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, I present this testimony in opposition to HB 99.

As a mom of elementary-school aged kids, I am terrified of someone coming into their school with an AR-15.

To illustrate what that would look like: every day during the school year, our kids walk back from recess in a long single-file line of about 80 students. If I happen to drive by during this time, my first thought is always the horrific feeling that this line would be defenseless against a person with an assault weapon. The image keeps me awake at night and sometimes scares me so much that I drive to the school around this time just to observe the street for anything suspicious. I am not alone in this – multiple parents in our district have made the same observation.

Arming teachers does not address this fear. To state the obvious, the kids remain at risk when they are at recess, in the hall, or walking down the sidewalk in a long single-file line. As we saw with Uvalde, armed teachers are still no match for AR-15s. **We must address the source of the problem: assault weapons and the fact that anyone can obtain them.** Failing to do so only creates an illusion of safety when, in fact, the kids/teachers remain at risk and parents will continue to spend time and energy fearing for their kids' safety at school.

Teachers are already tasked with so much responsibility; this additional – and enormous – responsibility risks alienating qualified teachers from the profession. The kids would face heightened risks of accidental shootings (especially with such minimal training hour requirements) and teachers would face the additional stressors of storing and accessing their weapons. It is simply too much to ask teachers – on top of everything they already do – to also play the role of security officers.

Please stop distracting from the conversation. Reasonable restrictions on gun ownership is the only way forward. In some jurisdictions, active shooter trainings are now encouraging kids closest to the door to jump around and wave their hands to sacrifice themselves and give their classmates more time to escape – the threat of school shootings and lack of coherent response is creating a culture of complete indifference towards kids' lives. If you are truly “pro-life,” please reject HB 99 and focus on legislation to address the root of the problem.

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