

Dear Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to HB 99.

My name is Katherine Hiland, and I am a resident of Stark County. I am a concerned Ohioan and student in opposition to HB 99, which encourages and reduces the training requirements for arming teachers. I am fifteen years old, and a soon-to-be sophomore at Jackson High School. It wasn't too long ago that my own school district was a victim of gun violence. I remember being a confused and scared fifth grader, with my mother sheltering me from the news. Even not being a middle schooler yet, as a member of the Jackson band, I still knew kids who were there, because the band practiced at the middle school. Little fifth graders, who had come to make music, were instead forced to hide for hours.

This bill, encouraging the arming of teachers and lowering training hours, would not have helped prevent this incident. Nor would it help us now. I know that if I had walked into any of my classes this year, knowing that my teachers carried guns and had such little training, I wouldn't have trusted them as much as I do. I would be worried, and it's not because they are irresponsible. More guns in schools only increases the access students have to guns. And I would know best; teenagers can get up to a lot of trouble. Accidents could happen, or someone with bad intentions could get ahold of a gun. Also, school shooters are often students from the school, past or present. This asks teachers, or other school staff, to potentially shoot and kill their own students. For many members of school faculty, they are in these jobs because they love their job and their students. This is an impossible task for them; to shoot children that they've sworn to teach and protect. And it only creates more danger for everyone in a school environment.