

Testimony on House Bill 99
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Submitted by:
Lynn Lunoe

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 strongly oppose HB 99. It will endanger children, teachers, staff and resource officers in Ohio schools. Research clearly shows that bringing guns, any guns, into classrooms will make children less safe. In the hands of undertrained users, those guns pose an even more lethal threat.

It's an alarming fact that firearms are now the leading cause of death for America's children and teens.

The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled that an armed teacher must have at least 20 years' experience as an active duty peace officer or have completed Ohio Peace Officer Training. That is a minimum requirement and ***should remain in force***.

HB 99 guts down that training requirement to only 22 hours. That's far less than the 24 hours of instruction plus 8 hours of driver training plus 50 hours of accompanied driving required to get a simple driver's license in Ohio. And, unlike guns, cars are used for many other purposes other than killing.

There is NO amount of training that makes it truly safe for teachers to carry guns in schools. With that in mind, if HB99 passes, poorly-trained people will be armed in schools. We can certainly expect more shootings to occur, more accidental shootings, find guns left in unsecured locations available to students, and risk guns falling into the wrong hands.

If an active school shooter enters the school vicinity, encountering poorly-trained resource officers at the school, there will be more children's lives lost. I remind you that, as an Ohio legislator, you are sworn to protect Ohio school children.

Just look at what happened in Uvalde, Texas. Nineteen armed officers stood in the hallway outside the fourth-grade classroom for over 40 minutes while the shooter, armed with an assault rifle, picked off the teachers and the 10-year-olds inside. And the Robb School resource officer wasn't even on campus at the time the shooter entered the building. This clearly illustrates the problems with fallible security staff and poorly-executed protocols.

To keep Ohio students safe, we must act upon the extensive gun safety research. We must pass criminal background checks on all gun sales, pass red flag laws and safe storage laws, add physical security upgrades, develop emergency planning among staff, and provide access to school mental health professionals. And, then, ban assault rifles, which have no useful purpose in a civilized society.

For the safety of all of Ohio's school children, ***please reject HB 99*** and focus instead on legislation that would prevent school shootings before they occur.

Respectfully,
Lynn Lunoe
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