

Testimony on House Bill 99
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Submitted by:
Melissa Sull

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 a parent and school volunteer, and I am in strong opposition to HB99.

More loaded guns in schools will make our children less safe. Research is clear, having access to a gun increases the risk of suicide by three times and homicide by two times. If we really want to keep students safe, we must follow the research: 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.

The Ohio Supreme Court ruled that an armed teacher must have at least 20 years of experience as an active-duty peace officer or have completed Ohio Peace Officer Training. That is reasonable. HB 99 would gut that training requirement down to only 22 hours, which is unreasonable and irresponsible. More guns wielded by people with less training is a recipe for disaster. And when that disaster occurs the victims will likely be offered nothing more than condolences and prayers from the legislators who engineered their avoidable tragedy.

Last week in Uvalde, TX, nineteen armed law enforcement officers waited outside of Robb Elementary School during an active shooting emergency. They were professionals trained to enter immediately, yet they did the exact opposite as they waited for more equipment and reinforcements. HB99 expects a teacher with only 22 hours of training and no law enforcement experience to both care for her classroom and kill an armed intruder. Teachers already have a difficult job without being expected to do what nineteen armed law enforcement professionals are unwilling to take on.

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

Respectfully,

Melissa Sull