

Testimony on House Bill 99 Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Submitted by:
Mike Welker

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.

While I applaud the effort to DO something to protect Ohio's children from this epidemic of violence, HB 99's "solution" of arming teachers with minimal training is counter-productive to that goal. It is a demonstrably flawed concept that will not solve this problem and is likely to foster more violence.

Imagine if the issue were that sticks of dynamite were being used by individuals in crisis to attack children. Nobody would then be arguing for pre-positioning dynamite in classrooms as a response. The only one that might would be dynamite manufacturers.

In a not dissimilar way, data from non-partisan researchers documents that injecting more guns causes more gun violence. Numerous states that have allowed armed teachers have had lost or stolen guns that have ended up in students hands, as well as discharges on school grounds in entirely different scenarios than intended. Additionally as various studies have found, notably the Harvard Injury Control Research Center, "a broad array of evidence indicates that gun availability is a risk factor for homicide." ("[Homicide](#)", HICRC) Access to guns has been a driving element in guns now being the leading cause of death for America children ([Lee, Douglas & Hemenway 2022](#))

As myself or anyone else who has worked in or around an actual classroom will also tell you, the delicate power dynamics of a classroom would also be radically altered by knowing the teacher is packing lethal force. Imagine how free & open debate in the Ohio Senate or House would be altered, if all of your co-workers came onto the floor with open holsters of six shooters strapped to their side??

But aside from statistically increasing the likelihood of violence, and warping the learning environment, the practical effectiveness of armed 'good guys' in the actual event of an attack has been shown by various independent sources to be minimal. Per numerous RAND corporation studies, highly trained professional police & military personnel with hundreds of hours of training have not proven to be able to shoot effectively in actual events. ([Rostker, Hanser, Hix, Jensen, Morral, Ridgeway & Schell – 2008](#)) HB 99 would inject barely "trained" civilians with as little as 2 hours of live experience into a potential shootout in confined spaces with many innocent bystanders.

Likewise, the circular 'argument' of just the fact that *knowing* teachers will be armed will be a deterrent, ignores the growing reams of documentation on school shooters. Even a passing scan of one of these horrific manifestos shows that these individuals in crisis are not rational actors, calmly weighing pros and cons of their murders.

Further, as the Buffalo tragedy illustrated, even with the best case scenario of a highly trained & experienced retired police officer being on the scene, ready civilian access to "tactical gear," meant a 'good guy with a gun' was nullified by bullet-resistant body armor.

In summary, while HB99 certainly has the virtue of simplicity, in practice the data tells us it will demonstrably introduce new dangers to Ohio's classrooms, statistically not offer effectiveness to 'neutralize' active shooters & poison classroom learning dynamics. As such, let's shift our time & focus to solutions that have proven effective in other states.

Respectfully,

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