

Testimony on House Bill 99
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Submitted by:
(your name)

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 very concerned about HB 99 and am in strong opposition. I understand that the goal of HB99 is to keep Ohio's children safer, but in fact, it will do the opposite. If we really want to keep students safe, we must listen to 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.¹ Moreover, asking our teachers to shoulder this burden, instead of taking the steps that will allow them to do their jobs safely, is simply unconscionable. Our teachers already provide far more to our children than their job description requires. They are not only educators, but nurses, counselors, and caregivers. They spend their extra time fundraising for our children's school supplies and their extra money ensuring that the kids in their classroom do not go hungry. Don't we owe it to them to allow them to do their jobs in safety? Without being the ones personally responsible for ensuring it?

Keeping Ohio school children safe most definitely does not include radically reducing the current training requirement for armed teachers. The Ohio Supreme Court 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. HB 99 would gut that training requirement down to only 22 hours. There is no amount of training that makes it safe for teachers to carry guns in schools. 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,

Olwyn Conway
Columbus, Ohio

¹<https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-our-schools-safe-a-plan-to-stop-mass-shootings-and-end-all-gun-violence-in-american-schools/>