

Testimony on House Bill 99
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Submitted by:
Summer Zickefoose

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.

As a parent, teacher, and citizen, I strongly oppose HB 99. While HB99 proposes to keep Ohio's children safer, it will unequivocally do the opposite. The research is clear that bringing guns into classrooms will make children less safe. Firearms are now the leading cause of death for America's children and teens. Simply having access to a gun increases the risk of suicide by three times and homicide by two times. The less access and exposure that children have to guns, the safer they will be. A number of legislative solutions are backed by research: passing criminal background checks on all gun sales, passing red flag laws and safe storage laws, adding physical security upgrades, developing emergency planning among staff, and providing access to school mental health professionals.¹

HB99 would circumvent the current training requirement for armed teachers or staff, drastically reducing it to only 22 hours. 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 (728 hrs of instruction). 22 hours of training would not prepare a police officer to respond to an active shooter, let alone a teacher whose primary responsibility and training is in education. No amount of training or circumstances makes it safe for teachers to carry guns in schools. Increased guns in schools will increase gun violence due to accidental shootings, suicides, and guns winding up in the hands of students. 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,

Summer Zickefoose, Canfield, Ohio

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