

Testimony on House Bill 99  
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Submitted by:  
Tina Gasbarra Larsen

Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee, I appreciate that there is still a democratic process in place that allows me to present this testimony in opposition to HB 99, which would gut safety training for armed teachers.

I am proud to have friends on both sides of the political aisle and welcome conversations and strategies designed to find common ground in support of common sense gun violence prevention legislation. The opinions and questions I would ask you to consider, are my own.

If the intention of this Republican dominated committee was actually to make schools safer, the facts support that there is no logical rationale in reducing the currently required gun safety training for teachers, at more than 700 hours, to a mere 22 hours, which even proponents of arming teachers agree to be a terrible idea. So who exactly are you representing here? Not teachers, since a “March 2018 survey of almost 500 US teachers found that 73 percent opposed proposals to arm school staff”<sup>1</sup> since the Ohio Federation of Teachers, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Education Association agree with the National Association of School Resource Officers who “strongly opposes proposals to arm teachers due to the risk it would pose to law enforcement, students and the school community, as well as to the teachers themselves.”<sup>2</sup> Never mind that “law enforcement officers receive an average of 840 hours of basic training including 168 hours of training on weapons, self-defense, and the use of force.”<sup>3</sup> So why is such a ludicrous idea even being entertained? Which Ohio voters are you representing by passing legislation that we know just follows the gun lobby’s argument that the only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun. But your job is not to serve gun manufacturers or the gun lobby that will profit while legislation like this plays Russian Roulette with the lives of our children.

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[https://everytownresearch.org/report/arming-teachers-introduces-new-risks-into-schools/?\\_gl=1\\*c2xfmn\\*\\_ga\\*odq4mtixotkylje2ntm2odq3mdu.\\*\\_ga\\_lt0fww3ek3\\*nty1mzc1otqxc40ljaumty1mzc1otqxos4w](https://everytownresearch.org/report/arming-teachers-introduces-new-risks-into-schools/?_gl=1*c2xfmn*_ga*odq4mtixotkylje2ntm2odq3mdu.*_ga_lt0fww3ek3*nty1mzc1otqxc40ljaumty1mzc1otqxos4w)

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[https://everytownresearch.org/report/arming-teachers-introduces-new-risks-into-schools/?\\_gl=1\\*c2xfmn\\*\\_ga\\*odq4mtixotkylje2ntm2odq3mdu.\\*\\_ga\\_lt0fww3ek3\\*nty1mzc1otqxc40ljaumty1mzc1otqxos4w](https://everytownresearch.org/report/arming-teachers-introduces-new-risks-into-schools/?_gl=1*c2xfmn*_ga*odq4mtixotkylje2ntm2odq3mdu.*_ga_lt0fww3ek3*nty1mzc1otqxc40ljaumty1mzc1otqxos4w)

<sup>3</sup>[https://everytownresearch.org/report/arming-teachers-introduces-new-risks-into-schools/?\\_gl=1\\*c2xfmn\\*\\_ga\\*odq4mtixotkylje2ntm2odq3mdu.\\*\\_ga\\_lt0fww3ek3\\*nty1mzc1otqxc40ljaumty1mzc1otqxos4w](https://everytownresearch.org/report/arming-teachers-introduces-new-risks-into-schools/?_gl=1*c2xfmn*_ga*odq4mtixotkylje2ntm2odq3mdu.*_ga_lt0fww3ek3*nty1mzc1otqxc40ljaumty1mzc1otqxos4w)

Fact: "The United States has a gun violence epidemic, and it's not one shared by its peers. The nation that by one estimate has more guns than people has the highest rate of firearm deaths compared with other high-income countries. Mass shootings, an all-too-common occurrence in the U.S., are also exceedingly rare in peer countries -- where governments have often been quick to pass gun reform in the wake of such tragedies."<sup>4</sup>

Fact: "Statistics show as gun laws loosen, gun deaths increase."<sup>5</sup>

Fact: "Guns are now the number one cause of traumatic death in the United States, exceeding the 38,824 traffic fatalities in 2020 by 16%."<sup>6</sup>

Fact: "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 children are exposed to guns, the safer they will be. 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."<sup>7</sup>

Sincerely, your would be partner in ethical common sense solutions,

Tina Gasbarra  
Plain City

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<sup>4</sup><https://abcnews.go.com/US/countries-show-us-americas-gun-violence-epidemic/story?id=80495637>

<sup>5</sup>

<https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2022/05/25/on-gun-violence-weve-got-to-be-mad-as-hell-and-say-were-not-going-to-take-this-any-more/>

<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>7</sup><https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-our-schools-safe-a-plan-to-stop-mass-shootings-and-end-all-gun-violence-in-american-schools/>