

GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT AND REFORM COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 7/19/2020

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Organization Representing: Self _____

Testifying on Bill Number: Senate Bill 317 _____

Testimony: _____ Verbal Written _____ Both

Testifying As: _____ Proponent Opponent _____ Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? _____ Yes No

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Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
John Foley

Chair Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to SB 317.

I am an Ohio voter, father, grandfather and retired educator. I served as a teacher, an elementary principal and a school superintendent with Toledo schools for 32 years. I remember sitting at my principal's desk after the Columbine shooting wondering how I could keep my school staff and students safe in a school shooting scenario. I have watched each and every account of mass shootings in schools, movie theaters, malls, and concert venues with a heavy heart. Never has bringing guns into schools been a part of my thoughts.

We must do something! But arming teachers is the wrong approach. Teachers have taken their career path to save lives, not to take lives. More guns in schools is not an answer to gun violence. I have worked with teachers through their own mental health issues. I have worked with teachers with performance issues. I have worked with many, many wonderful teachers who are dedicated and committed to their students. In every case I cannot imagine them carrying a gun to make students safer.

Even worse would be to arm teachers with minimal training, without regard for the safety of everyone in a school. What message would this send to students to wonder if a teacher is carrying a loaded gun or not. More guns is not an answer to school shootings, and SB 317 will just continue our state down a path to arm more and more people and create a mindset that gun violence is an answer to a problem.

We can do better than this for our students and for our state. Pass universal background checks without loopholes. Pass Red Flag laws. Pass legislation supporting education about " See something, Say something" programs. Do the right thing based on research and best practice and you will earn the respect of the citizens of Ohio and our nation. I urge you to reject SB317.

Respectfully submitted,

John Foley
Toledo, OH