

Erin Gabbard SB 317 Testimony
Tuesday, July 21, 2020

Chairman Coley, Vice Chairman Huffman and other members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, thank you for considering my testimony. My name is Erin Gabbard. I am the proud mother of two children in the Madison Local School District. The views I express in this testimony are my own, and I offer them in opposition of SB317.

SB317's proposed modifications to Revised Code section 109.78 would authorize local school boards to allow school employees to carry loaded firearms on school grounds without requiring them to undergo any training. This does not protect our children, it endangers them.

We don't have to imagine how local school districts might abuse this authority; we can look to the Madison Local School Board's actions in April of 2018. I'm proud to be a Madison parent. I love the school; I love the teachers and the staff. But over these past two years, I've also felt deeply concerned about the district's plans to arm teachers and other staff members in our school. And I've felt frustrated by how they chose to do it without transparency.

The school board passed a resolution to allow teachers to be armed while on duty with only 27 hours of training. They paid for staff to complete the FASTER program which only included 10 minutes of scenario training with the actual weapons that they would be carrying. As just one example of how inadequate the oversight was for this program, one of the armed staff members was allowed to carry a weapon into the school after failing the shooting accuracy test twice, before finally passing on the third attempt. The FASTER program through which the staff was training is also deeply troubling. At the end of the testimony, I have included a few of the openly racist and Islamophobic slides that were used to "train" the teachers. WARNING: The slides contain disturbing content.

Some people have suggested that parents who are worried about armed gunmen watching their children at school should just "vote with their feet" by moving somewhere else. However, Madison, like many school districts, keeps key details of their armed staff program secret from parents. I know this, because I asked the Madison school board repeatedly how they intended to screen, train, and supervise our district's armed staff, and they refused to answer these simple questions. It wasn't until our lawsuit forced them to answer that parents learned just how little training armed staff in our district were getting. Some school districts don't even tell parents that they're arming teachers to begin with. How can parents "vote with their feet" when they aren't even told what is going on?

It has been a long two years. My valid concerns are being ignored, but I continue to speak up because I want safe and common-sense solutions for protecting our children in school. I want to believe that we all want that. I have tried to understand why anyone would consider a bill with as little as zero hours of training for armed staff and keep coming back to the same questions...who does this bill protect? Who does this bill serve?

It doesn't protect our children and our teachers. It puts them at additional risk. Arming teachers, especially with inadequate training, endangers students and staff. As of March of this year, there

have been over 90 reported incidents of guns being mishandled at schools. These incidents include employees leaving their firearms unattended and accessible to students, unintentionally discharging their firearms, and using the threat of a firearm to discipline students.

I often think about the shooting that occurred in our school in 2016. It happened during lunchtime in a full cafeteria. Children were screaming and running everywhere. There was pandemonium. Do we really expect a teacher with as little as zero hours of training to be able to use their weapon in a way that doesn't harm the students it proclaims to protect, as they run for their lives in and out of sightlines? If our staff members had been armed in 2016, how much more blood would've been shed because of lack of training?

Who does this bill protect? Who does this bill serve? Please ask yourself these questions, and please answer honestly.




If you are a proponent of keeping our children safe in our schools, you must develop comprehensive legislation that requires annual rigorous training and testing that include de-escalation tactics, psychological evaluations, and routine independent assessments for armed staff. This bill does none of that. This bill is not about protecting our children. If you are concerned with the safety of our students in Ohio schools, you must vote no on this bill.

Slides from FASTER Training Presentation

HOW DO WE RESPOND?

If you can not escape ... You have no CHOICE

- You must FIGHT.
- You will be KILLED.
- Adult males will be tortured and killed
- Females will be raped and killed.



Time is all that matters

Allahu Akbar الله أكبر

Usually translated "God is [the] greatest," it is a common Islamic Arabic expression, used as both an informal expression of faith and as a formal declaration.

"When the confrontation begins, strike like champions who do not want to go back to this world. Shout, "Allahu Akbar," because this strikes fear in the hearts of the non-believers."— Mohamed Atta 9-11 Hijacker



Time is all that matters

"Allahu Akbar..."

- Very common for terrorist...to yell this expression before and during attack."

- Very common for terrorist (Level 3a or 3b) to yell this expression before and during attack.



- Lets end on a happy note.