

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted by:
Chris Wolf

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 writing today as a concerned citizen and voter in the state of Ohio about SB 317. I am opposed to the proposed bill and encourage you to oppose it. I believe the proposed bill does not address the real cause of school shootings and makes schools less safe.

With respect to the real cause of school shootings, the problem is too many deadly guns in the hands of too many people with either ill intent or with mental health problems. The legislature would be better served considering ways to eliminate or limit the sale and possession of military-style weapons, taking steps to ensure the safe storage of all firearms, and passing laws that allow for firearms to be taken from those who demonstrate signs of being a threat to themselves or others. Taking these steps would improve overall public safety, within and beyond our schools.

With respect to arming school personnel - other than those hired specifically to provide security - to carry firearms on the job creates additional risk to students and staff. Allowing them to do so with or without substantial training or certification increases that risk significantly. I can easily imagine a number of terrible accidental or intentional scenarios - other than stopping an active school shooter - where "things go wrong" and someone is needlessly injured or killed. I'm sure you can imagine these scenarios as well. I'm sure you can also imagine the liability that such scenarios create for school districts and the members of their school boards.

Given the above, I urge you to reconsider your pursuit of the passage of this bill. I applaud your desire to improve the safety within our schools. However, I believe the tactic of arming school personnel - other than those specifically hired to provide security with the appropriate training and experience - fails to accomplish that goal and actually has the opposite effect. Please vote no on SB 317.

Sincerely,
Chris Wolf
Rocky River, Ohio