

## Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Chair Wm. Coley, Vice Chair Matt Huffman, Ranking Member Hearcel Craig and Committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony opposing SB 317. I am an Ohio voter and former Level I Trauma Center E.R. R.N. and because of my background I rely heavily on facts and evidenced based research data.

Peace officer training requirements are put in place for a reason- to ensure that lethal force is a last resort and not the first go-to when encountering a dangerous situation. “Education is different than training. Training means teaching police officers to react to a given situation in the field. Education involves developing the mental and moral tools police officers should possess to build strong relationships with the community.”<sup>1</sup>

Another take on putting guns on school campuses is described as follows “Their dismal performance doesn’t come as a surprise to security and tactical experts, who in a [recent article](#) in *The Nation* warned that during an active shooting, an armed civilian without extensive training posed a greater security risk than a benefit. As David Chipman, a former ATF agent and member of a SWAT team, explained: “Training for a potentially deadly encounter meant, at a minimum, qualifying four times a year throughout my 25-year career. And this wasn’t just shooting paper — it meant doing extensive tactical exercises. And when I was on the SWAT team we had to undergo monthly tactical training.” This is a far cry from the four hours of classwork and paper target shooting practice required to get a concealed carry license in Florida and Texas, for instance. “The notion,” Chipman said, “that you have a seal of approval just because you’re not a criminal — that you walk into a gun store and you’re ready for game-day — is ridiculous.”<sup>2</sup>

Instead of arming teachers time and money should be invested in counselors and programs instructing teachers how to recognize troubled students and be able to mentor them enabling them to thrive. Marco Vargas was one such student in South Central LA. A student from a troubled home who didn’t know any other way to express the trouble going on at home except to “act out”. “But even as Vargas lashed out in class, at least one person saw that there was a strong and thoughtful child beneath the surface ready to rise to a challenge. “He was a little bit of a troublemaker, but had a good heart,” said his fourth-grade teacher, Holly Sims. “He excelled at everything. I remember pushing him to put his best foot forward.” Sims recommended Vargas for the school’s gifted program. “The fact that she believed in me, and didn’t write me off as another bad kid, saved me,” Vargas said.

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<sup>1</sup> Kirk Burkhalter Retired officer Give police a real education before putting them on the streets. USA Today 6/12/20

<sup>2</sup> The Numbers on Arming College Students Show Risks Outweigh Benefit Evan Defilippis and Deven Hughes 11-9-15 The Trace

“Vargas is studying marketing and social entrepreneurship in the hope that after graduating from college he can establish a national network of youth leadership academies. He wants to empower young people like himself, who have grown up surrounded by gun violence, to be the driving force behind reducing it. “Students who are survivors of gun violence don’t need courses on empathy,” Vargas said recently. “We’ve experienced the struggles ourselves. What we need is the resources to become successful leaders.”<sup>3</sup> Had this student not been counseled beginning in elementary school and supported throughout the remainder of his secondary education he could have easily become a “school shooter”.

The last observation I would like for you to consider. Many entities promoting more guns in our communities have something to financially gain i.e. they sell guns and gun accessories, sell courses for how to use the weapons or own shooting ranges. Individuals opposing SB 317 have absolutely nothing to sell or to benefit from financially. Instead are advocating for a safer environment for students and for measures that would proactively prevent a student from bringing a weapon to school in the first place.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Bowman

8-30-20

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<sup>3</sup> Gun Violence Left a Mark on His Childhood by Ann Givens 8-13-20 The Trace