

Dear Chairmen and Women of the Committee,

My name is Becky Mehlretter. I've lived, voted, participated in a variety of citizen groups and raised my children in Lorain County for the past eight years. As much as I've missed my hometown in NY, I am happy to have found our home here in Ohio.

I'm writing today to express my opposition to SB 317. My kids attend our local public schools. Obviously, the pandemic has changed how my kids are receiving their education, but knowing they could go back to buildings where armed teachers or staff are present gives me great pause. It is hard enough, as a parent, to hear your six year old describe the stress and fear they felt during a lock-down drill during their day at kindergarten. I cannot imagine the added intimidation most kids would feel at seeing their teacher, an adult they're supposed to trust and rely on, carrying a weapon. I know my children would not feel comfortable in those classrooms.

SB 317 does not take into account the great risk for all students, teachers and any other people in the building if there are adults in school carrying a firearm. The lack of provisions for training paired with extensive research and statistics on the likelihood of persons being injured by a gun just by simple proximity, are a frightening idea. Public school parents, like me, want their children to have access to the best possible education in the safest possible environment. There are many proven methods to increase the safety in our schools. Programs that provide intervention for at-risk students, public awareness campaigns that promote secure gun storage and recognizing concerning behavior, and governmental restrictions on who has access to guns are just some examples that would help secure our schools.

As a concerned mom and citizen who deeply cares about the quality of life and education our children have access to, I urge you to vote against SB 317. Thank you for your consideration.