



GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT
AND REFORM
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date August 30, 2020

Name: Shannon N. Daniel-Waltas

Address: 2246 Harrisburg Pike
Grove City OH 43123

Telephone: (513) 498-3548

Organization Representing: N/A (self)

Testifying on Bill Number: SB 317

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: _____

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
Submitted by:

Shannon Daniel-Waitas

Chair Coley, 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 to you today as a citizen of Ohio, a Mother of five children and a Gun Violence Survivor. I oppose this bill because it will make our schools an unsafe environment for our children.

On October 6, 2014, my estranged, abusive, mentally ill husband came to my home and committed a murder suicide. At the time three of my children were in our home and heard their Father/Stepfather as he attempted to shoot and kill me, as he shot and killed Robert Dyer and then took his life. I can attest to the difficulty of helping my children and myself to recover emotionally, physically, and mentally from Gun Violence in a place that we believed was safe. We are looking at the six-year anniversary of the most horrific event of our lives this October. In the past six years, my children have had panic attacks during ALICE drills at their schools. The terror that my children and I experienced and the trauma that we live with is indescribable.

Robert Dyer was at my home because the local police department would not stop my estranged husband John from continuing to show up all hours of the day and night armed. When John shot Robert through the window in my bathroom my mind was awash in absolute fear. I did not think to pick up the gun that Robert, who had a CCW from the State of Ohio, had and defend myself with the gun. Robert was struck through the back of the head as well as his back where a bullet lodged in his lung. I had prior experience with various hand guns and a few rifles, but I was too terrified to think about trying to shoot back, or to even remember that Robert had a gun. All I was thinking about was the fact that my children and I were next to have our lives cut short by someone that had no business owning a deadly weapon.

My concern with arming teachers without proper training and continued practice with a gun is that they will freeze, that they will accidentally injure or kill other staff members and students, or that they will be unsuccessful and the attacker(s) will have more deadly weapons at their disposal. Most of my children are adults and are no longer in school. I do however have a son that is a Junior this year, and after he graduates, I have a son that will be entering into Kindergarten. I still have 14 years ahead of me to worry about my child's safety in school.

After the horrific events in my home, my family has reconsidered how they look at guns. My Father is still an NRA Member and he has his CCW through the State of Ohio. However, he is adamantly against Permitless Carry, he is part of the 88% of Americans

that believe that a permit should be obtained before anyone carries a concealed gun.¹ Research has shown that 80% of Americans believes that high safety standards are critical in issuing concealed carry permits.²

As a woman, a citizen of Ohio, a Mother, and a Domestic Violence Survivor and a Gun Violence Survivor I can tell you that the answer is not more guns. The answer is enforceable laws that protect our citizens. What would have stopped the Murder Suicide that happened in my home is not a gun in the hands of someone that could have stopped John. The answer would have been to keep him from legally obtaining guns from Shoot Point Blank in Blue Ash Ohio. John had several Civil Protection Orders against him from Clermont County Courts over our 14-year relationship and marriage. The answer would have been for Miami Township Police and Hamilton County Sheriff's Office to be permitted to remove his guns when I filed Police Reports on October 2, 2014, stating that John messaged me saying that as soon as he was released from Bethesda North Hospital for a medical issue that he would be committing suicide. The answer would have been to have anyone that I asked for help for years to act long before John purchased those guns, long before he came to my home knowing that he had no plans of leaving alive, knowing that he planned on making sure that he was not the only one to die that morning.

I implore all of you to think about what you are asking educators to do. Their job is to help our children learn the skills that they will need the rest of their lives. They did not sign up to go into battle. They should not have to face down an armed attacker. They need to concentrate on their students. We need to pass enforceable laws that prevent these attacks from ever happening. So that educators, staff and students never have to survive the trauma that my children and I live with daily.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannon Daniel-White".

¹ Kevin Ingham, "New Survey Finds Strong Opposition to Concealed Carry without a Permit" (memorandum, Strategies 360, March 2015), <https://every.tw/2tSNDyq>.

² Daniel W. Webster et al., "Concealed Carry of Firearms: Fact vs. Fiction" (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Gun Policy and Research, November 16, 2017), <https://bit.ly/2QJr2Mi>.