

Testimony on Senate Bill 317
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
August 31, 2020

Submitted by:
Ann Shroyer

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 Senate Bill 317. My name is Ann Shroyer and I am a resident of Delaware County and the mother of a public elementary school student. I moved here last fall from Central Pennsylvania, but was born and raised in Northwest Ohio. I began being more involved in following gun related legislation 3.5 years ago when my son was a student in a church based preschool in PA, with a view of the Blue Mountain. The conceal carry laws in PA are such that a church has to opt out of allowing firearms on the property. One morning a church volunteer was in the gymnasium before the start of school, as were other early arriving students and their parents, grandparents, and younger siblings. This volunteer bent down to lift something and his loaded concealed handgun and its holster fell out of his pants and onto the floor where it spun on the floor in front of preschool children and when it stopped spinning was aimed at my son's preschool friend, all of 3 years old. If anything else had fallen out of that volunteer's pants that morning, it would have been a story on the evening news, but because it was a gun, somehow it was not considered a danger. Peanut butter was not allowed in the preschool, but a gun was. I then learned of an instance in a parochial private school in Chambersburg, PA in 2016 where a teacher who carried a firearm, set it on the back of a toilet when she used it and subsequently 4 other children ages 6-8 used the bathroom after the teacher. The last child reported the gun and thankfully no one was injured. These are just two examples of irresponsible behavior with firearms around children. Having firearms in a school is dangerous at best and having untrained, uncertified teachers and staff carrying firearms is exponentially worse. I have a brother-in-law who works as a law enforcement officer and has a written protocol about how to use the restroom while also carrying his service weapon, and yet a teacher would require no training for any situation?

I am also writing because of the inference in the last hearing that somehow people in rural areas would not need training. As someone who grew up in a rural area, I've never been a fan of the trend of lumping all rural people into one monolithic people, as if we're all the same and have some magical abilities to use guns. I was raised rural, with guns in a handmade gun cabinet that was in my living room - that was not actually safe storage. I was raised rural and shot a rifle one time, and decided it was not for me. I was raised rural and cannot remember a stop sign in childhood that didn't have gunshot holes in it. I was raised rural and remember hiding in the kitchen because someone was shooting at our oak tree that was in front of our house. I was raised rural and remember being held in school because another student shot herself with birdshot in the parking lot. I was raised rural and remember being with a group where some were shooting from the back of a moving pickup truck. I was raised rural and remember hearing a high school teacher used racist, sexist and homophobic slurs while teaching class every day. These events of my memory are not representative of all Ohioans from rural areas and neither is some inherent skill and knowledge about gun safety. Anyone

carrying a firearm around our children should have the highest level of training available, not the bare minimum or no training at all. It is an abandonment of your responsibility to keep our kids safe.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Shroyer