

Testimony on House Bill 99
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Submitted by:
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Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to HB 99.

I am very concerned about HB 99 and strongly oppose it.

I am a former educator, and I have a grandchild entering fourth grade in the fall. In-depth training in one's chosen subject matter is critical for a teacher. Without sufficient training, credentialing and licensure, teachers are less likely to help students learn.

I don't believe teachers should carry weapons. That's not their job—that's not what they went to college for. And 22 hours of training is insufficient and will certainly make children less safe in classrooms where learning should take place.

I understand that the goal of HB99 is to keep Ohio's children safer, but in fact, it will do the opposite. The research is clear that bringing guns into classrooms will make children less safe. Firearms are now the leading cause of death for America's children and teens. Simply having access to a gun increases the risk of suicide by three times and homicide by two times. The less exposure to guns, the safer children will be. If we really want to keep students safe, we must listen to the research: pass criminal background checks on all gun sales, pass red flag laws and safe storage laws, add physical security upgrades, develop emergency planning among staff, and provide access to school mental health professionals.¹

Keeping Ohio school children safe most definitely does not include radically reducing the current training requirement for armed teachers. The Ohio Supreme Court ruled that an armed teacher must have at least 20 years experience as an active duty peace officer or have completed Ohio Peace Officer Training. HB 99 would gut that training requirement down to only 22 hours. There is no amount of training that makes it safe for teachers to carry guns in schools. If HB99 passes we can most certainly expect more accidental shootings to occur, more guns winding up in precarious locations, and, should a real

¹<https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-our-schools-safe-a-plan-to-stop-mass-shootings-and-end-all-gun-violence-in-american-schools/>

school shooter enter the vicinity, this piece of legislation is going to contribute to the loss of life of the children you are hoping to protect.

You need to listen to the voting public—not the gun lobby. You should put the health and safety of students over gun manufacturers and others likely to profit from the sale of more guns. Your attention should focus on understanding the causes of gun violence and include a review of research into best practices for gun-violence prevention as mentioned above.

For the safety of all of Ohio's school children, please reject HB 99 and focus instead on legislation that would prevent school shootings before they occur.

Respectfully,

Deborah L. Hogshead
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