

Testimony on House Bill 99
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee
May 31, 2021
Submitted by:
Kevin Weinbrecht

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to House Bill 99. My name is Kevin Weinbrecht and I am a retired Teacher/Intervention Specialist and the grandfather of public school students. My teaching experience has been focused on working with inner city kids from throughout Cuyahoga County who required alternative education settings due to social emotional disabilities.

The childhood experiences of these students were drastically different from my own. As a child in Clark County I would look up on clear days and see the trails of warriors in their jets flying into and out of Wright Patterson Air Force Base. For my friends and me, guns were toys for killing "make believe" Nazis, bad guys and Indians. Real guns belonged to soldiers, police officers, and some of our families who were farmers and hunters.

As a teacher, I heard stories from my special needs students about witnessing gun violence on a regular basis and they considered me foolish because I would tell them that gun violence is not in any way normal for children. They would laugh at me because they could not understand a life without guns and violence. These years of my teaching experience began with fire and tornado drills and in the years before retirement included "active shooter" drills. My students could no longer consider our school a sanctuary.

In the decades from childhood to teaching I've been alarmed to hear special interest groups continually demand expanded gun rights, including the privilege to carry guns where they, as citizens protected by the second amendment, felt appropriate to do so. It also alarmed me to consider that these demands were offered as a "solution" to the astronomical number of gun deaths and violence in our country. As an Ohioan with good ol' "Buckeye" common sense it is impossible not to equate an increase in number of guns and expansion of privileges to carry them with the unacceptable number of gun deaths and violence in our state and country.

To continue to put forward the false premise that more guns, and especially in a school environment, will solve gun violence is unacceptable. School is a learning sanctuary where teachers and students are already stressed. Please pass real gun legislation that would make "Active Shooter" drills obsolete. Expecting teachers to arm themselves to protect students takes the responsibility from those who want guns to willingly accept meaningful regulation and places it on those who are already asked to do so much to educate our children. HB99, which expands arming teachers without the full training of a Peace Officer, is the opposite of common sense.

Thank you,

Kevin weinbrecht