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**OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
House Criminal Justice Committee
House Bill 99 Opponent Testimony
April 15, 2021**

Good morning Chair LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. My name is Scott DiMauro. I am a high school social studies teacher from Worthington with 16 years of classroom experience, and I currently serve as President of the Ohio Education Association. On behalf of approximately 120,000 members of the Ohio Education Association (OEA), thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 99. The bill would exempt a “person authorized to go armed within a school safety zone” from satisfactorily completing an approved basic peace officer training program. This would reverse the 12th District Court of Appeals ruling on *Gabbard v. Madison Local School Dist. Bd. of Edn.*, 2020-Ohio-1180, that is now pending in the Ohio Supreme Court.

The safety of Ohio’s students and educators are our utmost priority. The OEA members who served as delegates at our Fall 2013 Representative Assembly overwhelmingly adopted a legislative policy stating that teachers and other school employees should not be asked to serve a dual role as educators and school safety personnel armed with weapons.

House Bill 99 would prescribe no state training requirements for armed school personnel outside of Ohio’s concealed carry training, assuming that school staff are carrying concealed. This training is 8 hours, 6 of which can be completed online. For comparison, in the state of Ohio you need 200 hours to be a licensed nail technician. One of the plaintiffs in the *Madison* court case testified that the 24-hour training requirement that Madison Local School District has is less training than it takes to be a little league umpire in his area. OEA believes this level of firearms training is woefully inadequate and will ultimately jeopardize the safety of students and staff.

While we may disagree on whether arming staff is a suitable solution for responding to violence in a school, if districts do take this step, they should be given clear guidance. OEA believes an appropriate course of action for the legislature is to prescribe clear, robust state minimum training requirements for “other personnel” authorized to carry weapons on school grounds.



In 2014, Attorney General DeWine stated that “it’s clear that [armed school staff] should have more than just 12 hours” then required for CCW. He elaborated: “It’s not just about can I shoot a gun. That’s just a small part of it. It’s: Do I have enough training to be able to react so that my training goes into effect and I don’t end up shooting someone who’s innocent.” (*Dayton Daily News*, Jan. 28, 2014). AG DeWine asked the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission to develop recommendations for what training would be appropriate for school personnel. The model curriculum recommended approximately 150 hours of training, including subjects such as school shooting, subject control, use of force, building searches, crisis intervention, plus certification in first aid and CPR.

Of the states that explicitly allow school personnel to be armed, most require staff to complete a curriculum established by the state’s police officer standards and training commission, and many of these training requirements are substantial. For example, Florida requires 132 total hours of comprehensive firearm safety and proficiency training conducted by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission certified instructors. Texas, North Dakota, and South Dakota all require 80 hours. Allowing as few as 8 hours of training to be entrusted with a firearm in a classroom full of children is wholly inadequate.

In conclusion, OEA opposes House Bill 99 as currently written. We urge you to require rigorous training standards, created by safety experts, for school employees authorized to be armed within a school safety zone. OEA encourages that policymakers take the time for adequate deliberation on this issue. I am available to take questions.