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Ohio Federation of Teachers and Ohio Education Association Urge Gov. DeWine to Veto House Bill 99

Columbus, OH — Scott DiMauro, President of the Ohio Education Association (OEA), and Melissa Cropper, President of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT), released the following joint statement in opposition to House Bill 99, legislation that would gut training requirements for teachers and other school staff members who are authorized to carry guns in school buildings. HB 99 passed in the General Assembly on Wednesday. OEA and OFT are urging Governor DeWine to veto the bill when it comes to his desk:

“In the wake of the tragic school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, Ohio lawmakers are rushing to take action to address school safety concerns in our state. The Ohio Education Association and the Ohio Federation of Teachers want to be clear: House Bill 99 will make Ohio’s students less safe in their schools.

The safety of Ohio’s students and educators is our utmost priority, but we know putting more guns into school buildings in the hands of people who have woefully inadequate training—regardless of their intentions—is dangerous and irresponsible. Teachers and other school employees should not be asked to serve dual roles as educators and school safety personnel armed with weapons, but, if they are, rigorous training standards, as set under current Ohio law, are essential. House Bill 99 guts those requirements, capping the state training requirements at 24 hours and putting educators in the impossible position of making split-second life-and-death decisions without sufficient training. This could undoubtedly lead to more tragedies in our schools.

Governor DeWine has acknowledged this himself. When he served as Attorney General, he stated, “It’s not just about can I [armed school staff] 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](#)). He then asked the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission to develop recommendations for appropriate training for school personnel, and the model curriculum was set at approximately 150 hours of training. We now ask the governor, what has changed that would make you say 24 hours of training is enough to arm educators today? The answer is nothing has changed. Twenty-four hours is not enough.

Our students need to be in safe learning environments where they can focus on getting a world-class education; they should not have to worry about what could happen with a gun in the hands of an undertrained individual in their classrooms with them. More work is needed on House Bill 99, and more work is needed by the Ohio legislature to address the needs of our students and educators, like prioritizing mental health resources and enacting common sense gun safety reform. We strongly urge Gov. DeWine to do the right thing and veto House Bill 99.”

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