

Testimony for Public Hearing on SB442
Senate Judiciary Committee
October 13, 2015

My name is Sherri Masson. I am here today as a 15 year member of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. I'm also a retired classroom teacher of 30 years. Gun violence prevention and the education of children are two areas of policy of which I have some knowledge, and when the two intersect, I am passionate about seeing that the right thing is done.

The right thing to do in the case of SB442 is to reject it. This bill is based on the false premise that guns in our schools will somehow make our kids safer. If this bill is grounded in the fear of a person who might shoot a gun at our kids while they're in school, why would we try to remedy that by bringing more guns into that school? This thinking is difficult to comprehend.

The right thing to do is to start making good policy decisions based on impartial research. Instead of digging for statistics to match a desired political outcome, courageous lawmakers will do real research and will discover there is no credible evidence that having a gun makes us safer, but there is an abundance of evidence to the contrary. We know that 80% of children between 8-14 years old who die from gun violence, die in their own homes with guns that were placed there supposedly for their protection. Because we know this fact, we need to think very seriously about bringing those same guns into a school setting.

Almost 3,000 kids were killed by firearms in the U.S. in 2011. It has become the second leading cause of death for children in this country. We have an epidemic on our hands. And it's preventable. As horrific and headline grabbing as school shootings are, they still make up a very small percentage of firearms deaths among children. It's the daily death toll among children we should be focusing on: innocent bystanders living in homes and neighborhoods where guns are easily accessible and too often owned by people who shouldn't have them. Suicide and accidental shootings-all tragedies that happen when guns are in the mix of daily life. We should be doing everything we can to keep guns out of our kids' environments, not adding guns to them, like SB442 would do.

The right thing to do is to start making policy decisions based on common sense and based in reality. No doubt there are many CPL holders who fantasize about what it would be like to pick off a shooter and save the day, just like on TV or in the movies. But these heroics are not based in reality.

An FBI analysis of 160 active shooter situations between 2000 and 2013 showed that only one was stopped by a concealed-carry licensee holder and he was a U.S. Marine. 4 were stopped by armed guards, 2 by off-duty police officers, and 21 by unarmed citizens.

The right thing to do is to make our schools gun free zones, prohibiting deadly firearms of any kind, concealed or openly carried, unless handled by highly trained law enforcement. The presence of weapons in a school environment is disruptive. Schools have set up protocols and made costly changes to their buildings in response to school

shootings around the country. Other than an armed police officer, students and staff have been trained to see a weapon as a threat to the safety of the students. It is viewed as a violation of the sanctity of the learning community. Allowing individuals to enter the building with guns confuses the situation and negates their efforts. In the event of a real emergency, how will first responders be able to determine which person wielding the gun is the problem?

A loaded gun is dangerous and, by its presence in a school, raises the risk of someone being harmed. If it didn't, no one would carry a gun in the first place. The whole point of carrying a gun for "personal protection" is by making yourself more potentially dangerous to someone else. That, by necessity, makes you more potentially dangerous to everyone else within range. More guns mean more danger and I believe most Michigan citizens don't wish to put their children in danger.

Don't attempt to close the loophole in the present laws about open carry by extending the possession of guns to areas that should be gun free.

I am asking you as trusted elected officials:

-Reject SB422 or any law that makes it legal to bring guns into our schools, openly or hidden.

-Write good policy. Policy based on reality and reliable research, not ideology and misinformation from the gun lobby which is more interested in making profits from the sale of guns than keeping our kids safe.

Please...Do the right thing

Sherri Masson
Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence

Sources:

Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence: The Truth About Kids and Guns
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Injury
Prevention and Control.

Everytown for Gun Safety: Analysis of Recent Mass Shootings (FBI data)