

Date: March 13, 2022
To: Senate Fed and State Committee
From: Kristen Brady, private citizen
Reference to: SB 522
Opposition Testimony
Written Only

Committee Members,

I was a k-12 educator for 13 years before becoming a school counselor, which is my current position. In my career, I have been on a real lockdown twice. One was for a threatening, harmful non-custodial parent that sneaked into the building during lunch, hunting for their child, unknown at the time if they had a weapon, because they had threatened violence and stated they did have a weapon. It was discovered later that they were not carrying one. The second event was due to an active shooting (double murder) near our school building with the shooters at large. That school was in a rural area, right next to the woods, so the concern was the suspects could've been in that area or even have come into our building. Allow me to assure you, each event was traumatic. Pretending everything is "okay" while trying to keep students quiet and safe is a nightmare. Constantly listening and evaluating and creating different scenarios and plans for hours while waiting to be cleared is exhausting and terrifying. The second lockdown was 6 hours. I had kindergarten students with me and two walls made of glass surrounded us because we were in the library. We were not safe. They were impossible to keep quiet. I knew I could only physically carry one or two at the most. Until hour number 3, all I knew is there was a shooting by the road and the suspects could be anywhere. That's an awfully long time to stay in fight-or-flight. I still get physical symptoms from both of these events when I recall them.

Being a retired police officer's daughter, I was raised going to the range. He was also a firearms instructor for the police academy, so I've had the opportunity to use some pretty cool weapons at the range. It is fun. Its always been an enjoyable way to spend time with my dad and he would teach me something new or we would work on a skill, such as tactical reload. I've been trained extensively my entire life.

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But, I'd also willingly lay them all down if that's what it took to be safe in schools. At what point do we finally WAKE UP and say enough is enough? Okay, we had a shooting locally. Now we either take action, SWIFT, STRONG action, or we do nothing and reset the clock and wait for the next one?! HOW is this even a choice or conversation? WE NEED TO ACT!

I'm tired of the constant fear and trauma. I'm over the constant scenario-playing in my head, the "what if" they come in here, or "what if" it's during lunchtime? How do I keep hundreds of kids in the cafeteria safe? I've been trained to disarm an active shooter with a fire extinguisher. Why does this have to be a necessary skill set for an educator???

As research indicates, children are not yet capable of translating the threat of death or injury and a firearm. The public school should be safe and NO ONE should be bringing in firearms nor live ammunition into a school building other than the SRO! Do you not see the juxtaposition of mandating counselors to present suicide prevention curriculum (required by the Jason Flatt Act) and then bringing in a program normalizing and encouraging the use of a firearm, commonly used in attempted and completed suicides! I beg you to please take the only logical action and not allow the Eddie Eagle program in schools.

Thank you for your time.

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