

HB 1337

To the Education Committee

Rep Jay Elkin, Chair

Testimony in Opposition

From Cheryl Biller, Fargo, volunteer with Moms Demand Action ND

There are myriad problems with section 3 of this bill.

One of the most grievous risks of arming teachers and staff is that more access to firearms is strongly correlated with additional risk of gun violence. Research strongly supports the finding that if teachers and staff carry guns into schools, children are more likely to access those guns. Studies consistently show that the majority of children are aware of where their parents store their guns and have handled them without their parents' knowledge. The same is true in schools: when teachers and staff bring guns into schools, children too often know where the guns are and will access them. And we know that when children access guns, the risks of death or harm significantly increase. In fact, irrespective of age, access to a firearm triples the risk of death by suicide and doubles the risk of death by homicide.

Another serious concern about armed staff is the degree to which they can complicate law enforcement's response. Police have less than seconds to determine who is the actual threat, armed school staff shouldn't have to die for their job. "We don't know who the good guy is versus who the bad guy is if everyone starts shooting."

And last – why should tax payers have to pay for the privilege of enhanced security for what is certain to be forthcoming heightened security concerns -- i.e., unattended loaded firearms left around campus, etc.

Give this a DO NOT PASS recommendation.