

Dear Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify in response to House Bill 1297. My name is Tim Godfrey and I'm the superintendent of Kenmare Public Schools.

I would like to add to that I am also a ND conceal carry license holder, a combat veteran, and I have an extensive background in weapons training. With that, I am shocked and dismayed that such a bill would come before my state's Legislature. I am a strong proponent of the 2nd Amendment and very much in favor of the armed first responder law. I feel that in order to deter school violence that involves active shooters, we must be able to defend ourselves with like abilities. To allow anyone with a CCL in a school building is going to be damaging and put our students and staff at perilous risk. We spend vast amount of time creating, implementing, and training on our emergency action plan. House Bill 1297 will completely change the way, or even the ability, to respond to dangerous threats that involve weapons.

First, a Class 2 CCL allows anyone over the age of 18, who can pass a written test and background check, to conceal carry. Over half of our senior class and all of our staff and parents fit that category. As an administrator, I will never know on any given day how many guns are in my school buildings.

Second, because an individual is able to obtain a CCL does not mean they have total control of their faculties or do not have the propensity to seek violence on some level or another. HB 1297 will put our students, staff, and building visitors at risk of mortal harm every minute of every day that our doors are open.

Third, with any amount of unknown weapons in our schools on any given day, there is the possibility for accidents to happen, for weapons to be stolen and misused, and for our school

climate and culture to be shaken with fear of the unknown. Keeping our students safe is the highest priority. Completely reshaping the playing field in this manner puts us in the highest disadvantage and risk we could possibly be in.

I am a trained soldier. When on the battlefield, my advantage is knowing where my enemies lie, and the fighting power I will battle against. If HB 1297 were an Army regulation, it would rip that from my hands. As a school administrator, my advantage is having security measures and state laws in existence that place a hedge of protection around the students and staff I serve. HB 1297 will put these individuals at risk for loss of life. ND has been blessed in not having had to manage a school shooter incident. Is this a chance we want to take? Providing an avenue such as HB 1297 may be the fulcrum that weighs the balance against us. I ask that you consider the imminent safety of our children and educational staff and vote do not pass on House Bill 1297.

Respectfully yours,

Dr. Tim Godfrey
Superintendent
Kenmare School District