Dear Senator:

CeaseFire Pennsylvania is PA's leading gun violence prevention organization. We work to end the epidemic of gun violence across the Commonwealth and the country through education, coalition-building and advocacy. We are writing to ask you to vote NO on SB 621 when it comes back for consideration of the bill as amended by the House.

We have submitted position statements to [the House Education Committee](https://www.ceasefirepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ELCandCeaseFirePennsylvania.pdf) and [a joint statement with the Education Law Center to the Senate Education Committee](https://www.ceasefirepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ELCandCeaseFirePennsylvania.pdf).

Because we share your goal to ensure that Pennsylvania schools are safe places for our students to learn and for our teachers and administrators to work, we urge you to Vote No on SB 621. We do not believe the provisions of SB 621 -- provisions that allow additional categories of school security personnel to be armed on duty -- will make students, faculty or school personnel safer.

Pennsylvania already has in place a system that empowers school districts to employ armed police officers and/or school resource officers. There is a process by which the school districts determine who to employ, and there is a judicial process in place to determine whether those officers may be armed. However, adding school security personnel has not been shown to improve student safety. Adding yet another category of personnel who can be armed is unlikely to enhance school safety or security. Moreover, adding security personnel who do not have the same law enforcement background, training and experience of those personnel already authorized to serve as school security in the School Code is misguided.

Finally, although we understand that the legislation initially was intended only to address security personnel, we believe SB 621 could be manipulated by school districts intent on arming teachers as a "security" measure. The House amendments have made this even more likely: language  limiting the authority of school districts to arm personnel – security or otherwise – has been stripped from the bill, as has language that defines security guards as those who do not otherwise engage in programming with students.

Thank you for your consideration. We hope you will Vote No on SB 621.

CeaseFire Pennsylvania