

Testimony in Opposition to Amended H.B. 476
Ohio General Assembly | Senate
Committee on Government Oversight and Reform
December 7, 2016 | Columbus, OH
Testimony of Kareem El-Hosseiny

Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Seitz, Ranking Member Yuko and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony today.

My name is Kareem El-Hosseiny. I've been a proud Ohioan for 25 years, I graduated from The Ohio State University in 2012, I often dream about Graeter's Ice Cream, I vow to name my children Woody, Jim, and Urban, and I speak today on behalf of the American Muslims for Palestine.

H.B. 476 is illegal, it constitutionally limits the free speech every one of us is guaranteed by the First Amendment. On this alone, I ask you to table this bill immediately.

Not only is this bill unconstitutional, it is offensive and antithetical to our values as Americans.

This bill disrespects the education I received, right down the street from here, that taught me the beauty of discourse, the power of a strong dissenting voice, and the courage to speak out against injustice when I see it.

This bill is an injustice against me and you, my family and yours, our classmates, colleagues, and friends. Whenever xenophobia and distrust is widespread amongst Americans, civil liberties are always amongst the first to get thrown out the window. I urge you in this tumultuous time to not throw out our civil liberties and to be the protectors of American idealism.

We cannot suppress the free expression of protected speech as most recently designated by The United States Supreme Court in the *Citizens United* case, including exercising where to spend, or not spend, one's money. If one cannot express one's opposition then you are stopping just short of mandating that companies, individuals, small businesses, the good and honest people take an oath of loyalty to a foreign nation. Let alone a foreign nation frequently proven to have committed human rights violations. A foreign nation that refuses to accept our attempts at mediation, time and time again. A foreign nation that has been most disrespectful to our president.

I implore you to listen to the better angels of your nature and be the defenders of liberty and justice for all that I know you all aim to be.

Thank you, Chairman Coley, and the committee for hearing my testimony.