



November 20, 2019

Chairperson Callendar
Vice-Chairperson Wilkin
Minority Member Smith, and
Members of the House Public Utilities Committee of the State of Ohio

Dear Distinguished Members of the House Public Utilities Committee:

As executive director of the Ohio Council of Churches, I write to convey my strenuous opposition to SB 33. This bill serves as a clear and determined affront to freedom of speech that all Americans are guaranteed by the United States Constitution.

SB33 serves as an unneeded and unnecessary distraction that curtails our freedoms as it creates a new class of crimes, penalties, and fines that could apply to broadly to all people regardless of the issues to which they are speaking. This effort is government overreach - legislators should not decide whether or not people can speak out for themselves.

Ohio already have laws on the books for trespass and property damage. SB33 introduces laws are duplicative and unnecessary. It will lead to unnecessary lawsuits that cost taxpayers money to defend something that clearly violates the First Amendment of the Constitution

I am convinced that hardworking people in Ohio want elected officials to focus on creating jobs – not playing politics or silencing free speech.

SB33 is an embarrassing distraction that will put our state in the national spotlight for criminalizing free speech. Citizens participating in free speech and peaceful assembly are the sign of a healthy democracy. In my view, it is un-American for elected officials to pass laws that silence their own constituents. We should be encouraging greater participation in our democracy, not less.

For these reasons, I am energetically opposed to SB33. I would encourage you to use your powers to help people voice their views instead of criminalizing them for doing so.

Sincerely,

Jack Sullivan, Jr.

The Reverend Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr.
Executive Director

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