

Aronetics

May 13, 2019

Larry Householder
Speaker of the House
77 S. High St.
14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Chairman Doug Green
House Committee on Transportation and Safety
77 S. High St.
14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Opposition to SB52 “Improve Information Integrity and Security”

Dear Mr. Speaker and Chairman Green,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in opposition to Senate Bill 52.

Aronetics is one of hundreds of communications, technology and security companies in Ohio. We take issue with several components of this bill as passed by the Senate. Aronetics has experience in information technology arenas since 1994, when the internet was much different.

Consider two companies, A and B. Aronetics helps company B with cybersecurity issues and technical support in a myriad of methods and ways. However, Company A declined our proposal and went on their own. Eventually, as it is not if but when company A is hacked, they will seek damage control from the state (per SB 52) and further protection from creditors (per SB 220). Why are company B and Ohio citizens paying taxes to help company A recoup damages from their choice to not take preemptive action? Why is the cost put on taxpayers?

Further with regard to education and experience, Aronetics uses both hackthebox.eu and root-me.org to practice, develop and maintain skills. Ohio wants to create cyber boot camps around the state to teach cyber security at taxpayer expense when these resources are currently available for little to no cost at sites like the two aforementioned. The proposal to offer these boot camps at education institutions is insufficient because of the undue taxpayer burden, as well as the fact that the information and skills offered will be outdated by the time the student learns them. The aforementioned online resources update regularly, while a classroom cannot keep up as well with the ever-evolving IT realm. Shouldn't we expect higher education institutions to remain relevant, close the gap, and stay current? Aronetics was invited to last year's NOCHE (Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education) conference that addressed the education gap present. Is there not a better opportunity for our colleges and universities to create real-world experiences rather than create a volunteer force within the Ohio National Guard? We were recently invited to LCCC to advise Professor Lawrence Atkinson, who teaches cybersecurity. LCCC is the only community college in the nation with an associate degree available in cybersecurity.

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To his dismay, SB 52 may rob his current and future students of opportunities for which they are currently in school. Let's do the proper thing for our State, students, and Ohio's future.

Additional issues lain in SB 220. Aronetics knows that compliance is not security, yet SB 220 grants favor to small- and medium-sized businesses that are compliant. Aside, compliance costs much more than a cup of coffee, and there is associated costs to maintain effective compliance. Audits and assessments are not a one-time event, they are plural with the intent that audits, and assessments must be repeated on a schedule to maintain effective compliance. Most small- and medium-size businesses cannot afford this ritual associated cost. Routinely, we are requested to sign off on a cybersecurity audit and assessment certifying 'security' at a cost unfair to the auditor. Adding further issues with SB 52 if passed. America was founded on laissez-faire capitalism. Laissez-faire, or "leave-it-alone," in a translation from French, is a concept allowing private interests to have virtually free rein in operating business. The 18th-century Scottish economist Adam Smith strongly influenced the development of ideas about laissez-faire and, indirectly, the growth of capitalism in America. He argued that the actions of private individuals, motivated by self-interest, worked together for the greater good of society *if* markets were competitive. SB 52 can completely interfere with laissez-faire capitalism on the micro, much less the macro level. Aronetics is not the only information technology security consultant in Ohio. We may be one of a few that has roots in security since the early 90s which makes us a unique firm to help businesses. SB 52 is opposed by Aronetics because our constituents and clients are small- and medium-size businesses in Ohio and around the nation. SB 52 is written to take care of local governments, elections, business, and citizens. We are a proponent of SB 52 if the text is modified to be local governments, public offices, and elections though issues remain.

When Governor Mike DeWine activated an eight-member cybersecurity team from the ONG to mitigate the Akron malware incident, that was an appropriate response. The city ought to have had a proper cybersecurity analysis from a private company such as Aronetics. Additionally, every actor signed an NDA after and this action is neither a collaborative approach nor in accordance with common cybersecurity norms. We learn from others' experiences. When the Cleveland Hopkins Airport was attacked, the public was misinformed about the nature of the attack as well as presented proponent testimony, we agree that a collaborative solution is necessary between the FBI, DHS and a few local firms to mitigate the pressing issue. Does the taxpayer need to pay the National Guard for services related to the attack? Isn't the taxpayer already paying for the FBI and DHS to show up? Isn't this a double burden?

Small townships and governments need the resources to deal with a cyber-attack. We agree with Execute director Matthew DeTemple with the Ohio Township Association. The Aronetics main server was hit by Beijing 90k times a day before we blocked the country. We agree with Major General John Harris that 'an advanced threat goes undetected for more than eight months before an incident actually occurs'. We are an IT security company with the intelligence to notice and be proactive. Many townships could use a look over though in many cases the critical infrastructure is overlooked. Businesses and citizens of Ohio do not need Ohio Cyber Militia taking care of their cyber issue, on their phone or otherwise. The opportunity for abuse is large.

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Fourth comes from the State of Ohio. If this bill is passed, there isn't a list created to request help from information technology companies in Ohio to mitigate IT issues at businesses. Secretary of State Frank LaRose is correct; Ohio is at a critical junction with regard to cyber-security of our elections and infrastructure is 'vulnerable to ever-changing security environments.' Every plan is like a set of skis. This is an example of Ohio creating skis that are too long to ski safely on. To that end, this list and its organization are not yet dealt with. Is this going to be a round robin, FIFO or FILO queue? Is it going to be created and based on experience? This isn't a 'free-market' approach or solution.

Finally, Aronetics respectfully requests for your support of Substitute Senate Bill 52 for elections with amendments that remove clauses regarding local governments, businesses and citizens. A small government is just a small business, every fiscal officer at a city hall knows this. If Ohio wants to be the leader of the States with this bill, we have a long way to go by standing up and realizing that after the game, the king and pawn go in the same box.

Sincerely,

John Aron
CEO