Testimony of Brian D Kershaw, Sr

Dear honor and distinguished elected officials of the great state of Ohio, as well as, concerned residents of this aforementioned state,

I appreciate greatly the opportunity provided by due process and this particular system to hear the testimony of support to the Ohio Pastor Protection Act. The central heartbeat of the issue is in essence the proper and adequate interpretation of the First Amendment rights as ratified December 15, 1791. The amendment states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof…" The reason for this gathering today is justified due to a very real threat which has become imminent upon the free expression of religious conviction and value in the establishment of guidelines which clearly exchange the free expression of religious conviction to a politically approved expression of religious conviction. Numerous case decisions complicated by biased exposure have created a definite need to ensure the protective rights of religious leaders. This protection is especially true in regards to property use and the solemnization of marriages.

Several years ago while serving as the leader of a religious organization, I was approached by couple inquiring about marriage. Upon our initial meeting, we discussed the dynamics involved and expected in accordance with the values and convictions of the religious organization. The discussion exposed a gap in beliefs. As a leader within that religious organization, I expressed the freedom granted to me by the First Amendment to deny their request of marriage solemnization by our organization.

Now almost two decades later, would the law of the land declare the proclamation issued that day unlawful? I find it entirely possible unless additional measures are not approved to explicitly protect the convictional voices of pastors. The Ohio Pastor Protection Act attempts to provide that protection.

Thank you for your graciousness in allowing me to share today.