

**Proponent Testimony on House Bill 406**  
**House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee**  
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Good morning, Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss House Bill 406, and thank you to Representative Lanese and her staff for their work on this bill.

I am the Assistant Director of Forensic Services for Netcare Access. I routinely conduct forensic psychological evaluations and provide expert opinions to courts in Ohio, and provide trainings for local law enforcement and fellow mental health professionals. I am a former law enforcement officer of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, where I was involved in the activation of the agency's high-risk sex offender treatment program. Over the course of my career thus far, I have evaluated many violent individuals, and therefore take steps to maximize my safety and that of my family.

Due to my line of work, I routinely search for my information online so that I can monitor what is available, and take steps to keep that information out of the reach of people who may wish me harm. I easily accomplished this when I lived in other states. However, in Ohio, I learned that my voter registration information, including my home address, is a matter of public record. I contacted the Secretary of State's office, and I was informed that this was written into statute. I was told that if I wanted to change whether people could find me at home, I would have to change the law. This is why we are here today.

The Ohio Revised Code designates individuals who can be exempted from having their voter registration information included in public record. Current designees, as defined by the code, include "a peace officer, parole officer, probation officer, bailiff, prosecuting attorney, assistant prosecuting attorney, correctional employee, or federal law enforcement officer," among others. Forensic evaluators and probate pre-screeners are notably absent from this list. This omission does not make sense, given that we serve the exact same population as these designees.

It is not difficult to find personal information about nearly anyone online. There are numerous web sites that readily provide home addresses. Although many of these sites provide some circuitous route to having one's information removed, in Ohio, the information is readily re-populated since those sites often draw their information from voter registration records. As such, there is presently no measure that would prevent a vindictive defendant from easily locating me, my husband, or my child. This exposes us to unnecessary risk that far outweighs any need someone might have to contact me at my home. In fact, if a forensic examinee wishes to contact me about a professional issue, I am readily available at the Netcare Forensic Center.

It is true that most violence is not perpetrated by individuals with mental illness. It is also true that some individuals with mental illness are at increased risk for violence. We are tasked with offering expert opinions that have significant implications for the disposition of criminal cases, and defendants are sometimes displeased with the opinions that we offer to the courts. Whereas we understand that we are providing an important service to the courts, defendants often perceive that we are simply acting against them. Some respond by threatening us and our families.

In 2017, I conducted a forensic psychological evaluation of an individual with multiple felony charges in Ohio. When the police conducted a search of the defendant's vehicle, they located voter registration information for several people. The defendant had located and printed the home addresses for a judge, police officer, and other individuals involved in his case. He used that information to threaten an officer and his family members, slash the tires and break the windows of vehicles belonging to court officials, and set a fire on the judge's property. That information could easily have contained my address or the addresses of my colleagues or our family members.

I understand the importance of being accessible to the media and being transparent about my work within the confines of ethical and professional guidelines. However, this should not occur at the expense of my safety, or that of my family. If someone has questions about the work that I do, they are always more than welcome to contact me at my place of business. However, placing the precise location of my family into the hands of individuals who may wish them harm simply makes no sense to me and is unacceptable. This legislation bears minimal expense, if any, and provides a measure of common sense protection that cannot be overstated. As such, I ask that you vote yes on this legislation, and afford us the same protections offered to others who serve the same population. I will be happy to address any questions you may have. Thank you for your time.