Hello.  My name is Constance Gadell-Newton.  I am a criminal defense attorney in Franklin County Ohio.  When I became an attorney I took an oath to uphold the Constitution of the Unites States and the State of Ohio.  I do this every day at work when I stand up for the peoples' right to be free from unwarranted search and seizures, to be secure in their persons, and in protecting due process of law and equal protection.  I also occasionally represent concerned citizens who are arrested for protesting to assert their civil and constitutional rights.  I now that many people who protest do so because they feel a great civic responsibility to speak out against injustice and oppression and because they want to make a better world for themselves, their neighbors, and for future generations.

I am here today because I have major concerns that the proposed legislation, SB 250 is unconstitutional or will lead to violations of the constitution and political repression.  First, it is unnecessary because there are already adequate remedies at law to protect land owners from trespass, property damage, and theft.  Second, it is unfair to organizations, holding them vicariously liable if they are associated with individuals who violate the statute. One part of the bill imposes a fine on organizations that are complicit in a misdemeanor violation, which could include support for or organizing activists, or raising money for legal fees.  This infringes on our constitutional right to free association, and to peaceable protest.    In America, we are granted the right to peaceably petition our government for the redress of grievances, and to peaceably assemble.  SB would infringe on the peoples' right to free speech and peaceable assembly and free association.  It protects the interests of corporations to exploit the earth at the expense of the people who have to live here.  It was intended to deter the people from protecting themselves against large corporations who are trying to come into our State and exploit the land for a profit.

So I ask you today, please stand up for the rights of the people, and vote NO on this bill that would infringe on our constitutional rights.  A NO vote is a vote FOR the Constitution, including our rights to peaceably assemble, to life, liberty and happiness, to health and safety, and for our free association granted under the US and Ohio constitution.

Thank you.

Constance Gadell-Newton  
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