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Opponent Testimony October 9

“Critical infrastructure” protestors are not economic terrorists. They are community members fighting for their rights and safety in the face of fossil fuel destruction, both of their neighborhoods and of their environments. The true intent of this bill is to deter nonviolent civil disobedience by framing it as violent in itself, in an illegal and chilling move.

Offenses like vandalism and violence are already illegal in the state of Ohio and grounds for prosecution. Moreover, nonviolent offenses like trespassing are also already illegal, and those arrested for protesting oil and gas infrastructure *already* face legal consequences. There is simply no justified necessity for this law; only the necessity of preventing citizens from exercising their rights to freedom of speech and assembly in order to fight these companies. The [American Civil Liberties Union](#), [First Amendment Watch](#), and the [National Lawyers Guild](#) have all flagged these anti-protest bills as unconstitutional. Moreover, [United Nations experts](#) have determined that these bills are

“incompatible with US obligations under international human rights law.” There is overwhelming evidence that these bills are a result of pressure from the oil and gas industry, electric utilities, and chemical companies. [85%](#) of the nation’s “critical infrastructure” is privately owned. We are not blind to this corruption.

State lawmakers tried to prevent civil disobedience during the Civil Rights era with massive legal penalties, in addition to the allowance of outright state violence. History remembers, *we* remember, and we live to recognize when patterns are repeated. As state lawmakers and representatives of the *CITIZENS* of Ohio, do what is right, and what is LEGAL, by stopping this bill that is a direct infringement on the First Amendment right to free speech in favor of corporate power.