

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and Esteemed Committee Members:

I am shocked to learn of Senate Bill 33- Critical Infrastructure Facilities Offenses. This bill threatens the very core of our democracy, freedom of speech.

I am very concerned about the language that could intimidate whistleblowers. There is the additional concern of "complicit organizations." If a whistleblower goes to an advocacy group for advice on how to proceed, is that nonprofit now complicit even for innocuous acts like explaining which agencies to report their concerns? What if a media organization features the whistleblower's claims through print or broadcast to the broader public, is that media entity now complicit? If so, you have effectively stifled free speech further and exposed organizations to fines for simply fulfilling their mission.

It is through free speech that whistleblowers can protect children, communities, and taxpayers from potential environmental disasters or public health threats. It is through free speech and dissent that our greatest democratic victories have been made.

Proponents have claimed that this bill would address acts of terrorism, vandalism, and trespassing, but it is unnecessary as such acts are currently considered criminal and are successfully prosecuted under state law.

It appears to me there are "behind closed doors" reasons for the creation and proposal of this bill. It would benefit many large for profit industries that are seeking to get rid of that pesky problem of people who do not agree with their business plans and are trying to protect the public from harm.

Thank you for considering my comments,
Rebecca Acheson
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