

Criminal Justice Committee, Ohio House of Representatives
Testimony: Charles Watts, founder/CEO, Empathy Surplus Project
03/17/2021 - Our American 1st Amendment is sacred.

Our American 1st Amendment freedoms are sacred. And empathy for all Americans is the soul of the republic, Ohioans caring for each other, expanding our freedoms and fairness for all. My name is Charles Watts. And after 30 years, I am a retired financial advisor and limited partner with Edward Jones. And with ancestors from Ohio, I was raised in Jim Crow Mississippi, and am now grateful to be home.

Our American 1st Amendment freedoms are sacred. Moreover, we Ohioans say "With God, all things are possible." Furthermore, our Ohio public servants, recall our state preamble's gratitude to God for freedom's blessings in their oath. And, Ohio's representatives promise their best empathic abilities to protect and empower Ohio's caring citizens' 1st Amendment freedoms. In fact, when lawmakers and law enforcement exercise their sacred empathic abilities, Ohioans enjoy the blessings of liberty our frames envisioned.

Our American 1st Amendment freedoms are sacred. But HB22 would be an ugly orange wound to America's heart of it all. Moreover, my former clients and I have stood on the sidewalks of our city and county buildings in Wilmington at some time or another literally every year since 1991 when I moved there. And our county prosecutor joined black and white clergy and organized a counter peaceable assembly at the fairgrounds when the KKK came to town. And our annual banana split festival took on new meaning. All because, as wealth creators, all of us deserve protection and empowerment by ethical business, civil society, and effective government.

Our American 1st Amendment freedoms are sacred. Also in Wilmington, our ethical police chief helped make our United Methodist Church George Floyd Black Lives Matter demonstration safe. And petitioners for redress for George Floyd's murder by corrupt police felt safe. But HB22 would help dismantle our 1st Amendment public protections for wealth creators, i.e., all the people.

Our American 1st Amendment freedoms are sacred. And our state laws and their enforcement must and can exhibit profound empathy for and responsibility to all Ohioans, not intimidation. But it can happen only if HB22 dies here and now in this committee. Let HB22's intimidation die. Thank you.