

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Jan Nesor, I'm a resident of Ohio, Franklin County, and a professor at the major state university here. I thank you in advance for taking the time to read my statement. I am writing to oppose HB22, a law that adds felony penalties for typically peaceful public protest activities, and introduces ambiguous language which could be used to bring major penalties for nonviolent actions that merely "divert the attention" of police officers.

There is no need for this bill. It is one of a number of measures introduced in Ohio in recent months that are transparently designed to suppress dissent in the wake of recent protests by environmentalists and Black Lives Matter supporters. More broadly, it reflects a worldwide

trend, from Hong Kong and India, to Turkey and the UK, to suppress and criminalize free speech and dissent. As part of my service as a professor I work as a volunteer with an international organization, "Scholars at Risk," that tracks attacks on academics and teachers that are escalating worldwide. The kinds of laws being considered here fit all too well with this trend: it does not reflect well on Ohio that it is being brought into alignment with these kinds of repressive regimes. I urge you to reject HB22 and related measures coming before the legislature.

Sincerely,

Jan Nesor