

Ohioans right to protest is under attack.

As a mother, wife, and elected official, I oppose House Bill 22 and House Bill 109. The bills are unnecessary, dangerous, and must not pass. The bills are a clear violation of our first amendment right of assembly and speech.

The First Amendment protects our right to assemble and express views through protest. The right to join with fellow citizens in protest is critical to a functioning democracy and at the core of the First Amendment. However, police and other government officials are allowed to place certain restrictions on our rights.

House Bill 22 seeks to criminalize civil disobedience and limit first amendment free speech. House Bill 22 increases protections for law enforcement at the expense of the civil liberties of the very citizen's law enforcement is meant to protect and serve.

Democrats and the ACLU of Ohio have several concerns with HB 22.

Failure to follow a "lawful order"

HB 22 further criminalizes failing to obey law enforcement, in this case, failure to follow a "lawful order." What is not explained is what is "lawful" and what is an "order." The history of such laws and their enforcement demonstrates many times this lack of clarity leads to increased problems among citizens and law enforcement.

Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, I ask that you please reject House Bill 22 and House Bill 109.

Sincerely,

Councilwoman Kim Thomas