



# A. Philip Randolph Institute

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To: House Criminal Justice Committee

From: Cleveland, OH A. Philip Randolph Institute

Date: April 17, 2021

RE: House Bill 22 Opponent Testimony

To: Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to voice opposing testimony for HB 22.

Cleveland Chapter of The A. Philip Randolph Institute a non-partisan, non-profit organization whose mission is voter registration, human equality, economic justice, voter education, and get out the vote oppose this bill for several reasons. Our country was founded on the concepts of civil disobedience and now our elected officials are seeking to limit a concept that has been an American value since the inception of our country.

HB 22 seeks to criminalize civil disobediences and limit first amendment free speech. It seeks to increase protections for law enforcement at the expense of the civil liberties of the very people law enforcement is meant to protect and serve. This bill is un-american and an injustice in every sense of the word.

Our forefathers thought free speech so important they made it the first amendment. They believed it to be critical to our government. Seeking to add a restriction preventing the taunting of police officers infringes on that free speech. We do not necessarily agree with taunting but it is a constitutional right which should not be restricted.

Under HB 22 hundreds of thousands of people are subject to arrest, detention, and imprisonment because they failed to follow a law if implemented. Sometimes civil liberties and freedoms mean allowing acts that we are not comfortable with to

Occur so we do not infringe upon others rights. Protests are perhaps one of the most American things a citizen can engage in. Our country was founded on these principles and should not be criminalized.

We employ you to protect the constitutional rights of our citizens. Citizens should be valued over any political aspirations.

Sincerely,

Willa Sammons Evans, President

Cleveland A. Philip Randolph Institute Chapter

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**Concurring Members**

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