

April 20, 2021

To: Ohio General Assembly

Re: H.B. 22

Dear State Representatives;

Today, April 20, 2021, the City of Minneapolis and indeed, the entire world, was informed of the guilty verdict rendered upon Derek Chauvin for the murder of Mr. George Floyd. Many people have stated that justice has finally been served, however, the fact remains that another black person is dead due to grossly excessive force by a member of the local police department. I am certain that the family of Mr. Floyd would gladly trade today's trial verdict to instead have George Floyd breathing on this day. The verdict might not have been possible without the video and bystander testimony of what they witnessed in front of that convenience store last Memorial Day.

Since the murder of Mr. Floyd last year, I have countless times watched the actions of those bystanders, one only 9 years old, and have asked myself what I would have done had I been placed in their situation as they witnessed the asphyxiation of George Floyd. Would I have stood by pleading to save the humanity of that handcuffed man? Would I have appealed to the other officers who were at the scene to intervene? Would I have approached Mr. Chauvin or the other officers with my hands up, revealing no criminal intent, slowly – one step at a time - very deliberately with an attempt to de-escalate what was obviously extreme, excessive and relentless force upon a handcuffed human pinned to the ground? Would I have attempted those actions, but also on my knees? I have followed the ensuing trial and sensed the profound remorse, even guilt, of so many of those witnesses that somehow, they could have done just a little something more to save the life of Mr. Floyd. I know I would feel those same emotions.

With passage of H.B. 22, any of the above actions would become a crime in Ohio. The initial summary of the bill says it would modify the Ohio Revised Code to "expand the offense of obstructing justice". In the case of George Floyd, Mr. Chauvin was the one who was obstructing justice. Your bill would criminalize those innocent bystanders who rightly understood that our form of government is supposed to guarantee "liberty and justice for ALL".

Respectfully,


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