



Ohio Pastors for Social Justice

April 20th , 2021

The Honorable Jeff LaRe
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Representative LaRe,

It has been brought to our attention that a bill has been introduced that could have a significant impact on the members of the community that I serve. The Bill that we are referring to is House Bill 22. It is my understanding this bill is currently in the Criminal Justice Committee for recommendation to the Ohio House floor for vote.

We are writing this to express my concern of House Bill 22 and the language in this bill that violates our First Amendment Rights the Freedom of Speech, Freedom to Assembly and Freedom to Petition. This bill is damaging to those that witness excessive force of a detainee by law enforcement and deprives our community from being able to know the complete story relative to excessive force claims. Video evidence protect both the officer and the person being detained or taken into custody. We all know that law enforcement solicits video from eyewitnesses, surveillance systems, and motion activated video such doorbell systems like “Ring” when crimes are committed. Why should our legislative officials subjectively determine what video or recorded content is appropriate as we seek truth. To arrest and charge a person who a witness to law enforcement detainment or arrest is a legislative overstep and solving a problem that does not exist.

The world was witness to the nine minutes and twenty-nine seconds that George Floyd was pinned to the ground by members of the Minneapolis law enforcement. Imagine if that horrendous event was not captured by bystanders. We would not be witnessing the trial taking place and fellow officers all the way up to the Chief of Police for the City of Minneapolis testifying that wrong doing took place on Memorial Day 2020. A bill of this magnitude passed into law will fail to tell the whole story, and condemn those that seek to shed light on the complete story.

We're asking that this bill removed from consideration by the Judicial Committee with no amendments. Any added language would be very harmful to those just expressing their' rights as Ohioans and Americans. As Clergy Leaders along with our congregations, request this of you and pray that your conscious will guide you in making a decision that is in the best interest of all Ohioans.

Sincerely,
Ohio Pastors for Social Justice
NE Ohio SECTION

Dean of Ministers Rev. Dr. E.T. Caviness
President Rev. Dr Leonard T. King- Baptist Ministers Conference
President Rev. Dr. Hebert Gator- Baptist Ministers Council
President Rev. Dr. Larry L. Harris -Mt. Pleasant Ministerial Alliance
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