

Chair LeRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland and members of the Criminal Justice Committee:

Thank you for hearing me today. My name is Leah Hackleman-Good, and I live in Lancaster, Ohio. I've lived in Ohio since 1987, when I came to Miami University for graduate school and stayed to earn my doctoral degree at Bowling Green State University.

I want to speak in opposition to House Bill 22—specifically, sections A7 and B, new additions to the core bill.

I have been active in protests and rallies here in Ohio. I traveled to Columbus many times this summer to offer support for Black Lives Matter demonstrations. I happened to be on High Street nearby on May 30 when Representative Joyce Beatty and Franklin County Commissioner Kevin Boyce were pepper-sprayed by Columbus Police. That day I also got a face of tear gas despite the fact that I was only standing on the sidewalk with my friends—other middle-aged women simply holding signs.

In Lancaster, Chair LeRe, we also had a dedicated group of nonviolent demonstrators every Tuesday evening last summer for Black Lives Matter. We were at Lancaster's busiest downtown corner. Every week, more and more citizens opposed to us gathered across the street with anti-Black Lives Matters signs, which is their right, of course. Heated arguments sometimes happened, just yelling across the street, until one day a young woman crossed the street to verbally confront the armed white supremacists.

My husband, a science teacher, crossed the street to try to help her when he saw that she was being physically assaulted. My husband was himself then physically assaulted by one of the anti-Black Lives Matter protestors who objected to him filming—and then suddenly he was on the ground, held down by a Lancaster police officer.

Of course, I was shocked and ran across the street to find out what happened. By that time, the man who assaulted my husband was long gone. By the time I crossed the street, my husband was hustled into a police vehicle. I couldn't speak to him, so I tried to talk to multiple officers

nearby. I kept asking and asking, “why are you holding him?” “are you arresting him?” and no one answered me.

It’s very unnerving to see your husband—an Army Ranger veteran with three earned degrees—sitting in a police car. I wasn’t sure what had happened, at that point. I was just panicked and my mind was flooded with fear.

Thinking about my experience, and what happened in Columbus to Representative Beatty—who was trying to assist someone in getting out of the street—I know that sometimes *it’s hard to immediately understand what’s going on in a situation*. In downtown Columbus, it was really hard to simply *hear* the police all yelling at once, and yelling a variety of commands. In Lancaster, my fear for my husband was *foremost* in my mind, not what police officers were doing.

I probably did annoy the officers there, even though by that time, everything had calmed down. I was also within arm’s reach of them, asking questions about what was going on. With HB22, the officers could have said my questions were somehow “taunting”

And that’s why HB22 is dangerous. It uses vague words, and only a police officer gets to define what they mean. I also think a lot about how sometimes traumatic situations, whether public or domestic, are confusing and frightening, which can lead people to not understand immediately what a police officer is telling them to do. That made me start to wonder, what if I had not been able to physically *hear* the officers? What if I had spoken a language other than theirs?

Ohio will waste time and resources because of these amendments, which are ill-defined and unnecessary. I ask you to please vote against HB 22.