

To The House Criminal Justice Committee

I value my constitutional right to peaceful protest. I'm gravely concerned with further criminalization of failure to comply with a "lawful order" as written in HB 22. I personally experienced a situation, when I was peacefully protesting on the sidewalk outside a sports venue in Cleveland, where a police officer ordered us to leave the grounds because it was "private property." He told us we were only permitted to protest across the street from the stadium. I think this illustrates one example of a law enforcement officer being unaware that his order was not lawful, since citizens are allowed to assemble and practice free speech in the public right of way provided they do not block pedestrian or motor traffic. We complied with the officer though our rights were denied by his order. We already have laws that require us to comply with police orders. Why the escalation? This law, if passed, will only serve to instill more fear and distrust of police officers and it will suppress our constitutional right to peaceful protest as a direct result of that fear. Do not advance HB 22.

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