

Chairman Wilkins, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for allowing citizens the opportunity to testify. My name is Rebecca Phillips. I am a retired teacher, a grandmother, and a longtime resident of Marietta. I am strongly opposed to SB 185, which will infringe on the rights—and possibly endanger the lives—of law-abiding citizens who wish to assemble peacefully.

As you know, a number of violent paramilitary groups, consisting of terrorists who call themselves “patriots,” are active in Ohio. Washington County, where I live, is home to a branch of the 3% Ohio Security Force, on several watch lists for its potential danger to other Americans. In 2020, armed members of the group attended a vigil here in support of Black citizens, to the distress of many other attendees. In that instance, the paramilitary members were peaceful, but weapons, strong emotions, and public gatherings are a dangerous combination. Too often, those carrying weapons are seeking to intimidate those who wish to exercise their constitutional right to assemble and make their voices heard.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this extremely dangerous bill that would empower the extremists among us. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony.