



My name is Hank Osmundson, I use he/him pronouns, and I serve as the director of Unitarian Universalist Justice Ohio. I wish to first thank you for allowing me to submit testimony regarding SB185.

I am asking you to vote no on this proposed bill because in its broadest sense it would serve to place a chilling effect on the First Amendment rights of Ohioans to assemble and speak. The shining star of our American Democracy is the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the rights it gives all Americans. For centuries it has served us well and offered an aspirational beacon to fledgling democracies around the globe.

The provisions of SB185 would erode those First Amendment rights for all Ohioans in favor of expanding Second Amendment rights for some Ohioans. The thought of gun-carrying Ohioans receiving special privileges over protestors and even law enforcement is astounding to me. I fail to understand why, for instance, SB185 removes provision in section 3761.16 of the Ohio Revised Code which prohibits the “*sale, offering for sale, dispensing, or transportation of firearms or other dangerous weapons, ammunition*” in a cordoned-off area during civil unrest, while leaving *dynamite or other dangerous explosives* as the only prohibition. What sense does this make? Dynamite and grenades are too dangerous, but firearms are not? Aside from being unbelievable, how would this not serve to dissuade Ohioans from exercising their First Amendment rights?

I also fail to understand why people who carry firearms into areas experiencing “civil unrest” - which would be allowed by the repeal of section 3761.16 - would be given the opportunity of seeking restitution from law enforcement officers who “violate” their rights that would be extended by this law. This is not an avenue any other Ohioan may pursue if and when their family members are killed by a law enforcement officer. Why would law enforcement have immunity from redress in one situation and not another? I find this offensive as an American and as a person of faith. Equity is the centerpiece of Justice, it is the centerpiece of American ideals, and it is the centerpiece of my faith.

Your responsibility as legislators in this General Assembly is to do your best to craft and pass laws that treat all citizens of Ohio in an equitable manner. I understand when sometimes there are gray or unclear areas of disagreement, and we have a system that is designed to address that. However, in the case of SB185, even a high school teacher turned theologian like me can see that the provisions here are heavily weighted in favor of one particular group of Ohioans over another.

Please do not vote to keep this bill moving. Do better and be better. All of Ohio will be better as a result.

Thank you again for allowing me to express my opinion in this venue.

Blessings & Hope,
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