

OHIO FAMILIES UNITE

FOR POLITICAL ACTION AND CHANGE

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Emily Cole, I use she/her pronouns, and I have the honor of serving as the Executive Director of Ohio Families Unite for Political Action and Change, or OFUPAC. OFUPAC was started by those most impacted by the criminalization of poverty, police brutality, incarceration and the criminal legal system here in Ohio. The families I represent rarely have a seat at the table yet so often are the voices most critical to the conversation at hand. They disproportionately bear the brunt of the legislative and policy decisions made in this space, given the criminalization of poverty inherent in Ohio's ever-expanding policing and incarceration systems. I am here today to stand for our families in strong opposition to Senate Bill 185.

I am running out of words to describe how infuriating it is that members of this legislative body hold the rights of firearms in higher esteem than the rights of the people of Ohio. There is no legitimate reason for removing the 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*" and so on in a cordoned-off area during civil unrest, while leaving *dynamite or other dangerous explosives* as the only prohibition. Please, I implore you – put *Ohio* first. This bill is dangerous for all of us. To hold the barrel of the gun in higher consideration than the person it is aimed towards is inhumane.

I am further shocked and appalled this bill would allow a right to redress for firearm owners should a police officer infringe on their "rights" in violation of this law, when over 660 families here in Ohio since the year 2000 had no right to redress when their loved one was murdered by a police officer. Removing immunity when a police officer allows *firearms into a cordoned off area*, while retaining immunity when a police officer kills one of our neighbors during an act of duty, is grossly negligent and offensive to us all.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Please, put the families of Ohio above the firearms of Ohio.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Emily Cole
Executive Director
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