

**Opponent Testimony for HB 291
House Development Committee
6/16/2025**

Eden Truax, Student at Ohio University

Thank you for reading my testimony. My name is Eden Truax. I am student at Ohio University majoring in Mathematics, and I hope to be a math teacher one day.

I am currently working in a STEM outreach internship where I work alongside engineers and other STEM majors encouraging kids to be the next technological innovators. While I see the importance of sharing information and working alongside peers in the development of technology, I am worried how the close ties HB 291 creates between Ohio and particularly Israel could negatively effect Ohioans' cybersecurity as well as encouraging military aligned technology partnerships with a foreign government.

HB 291 encourages giving Israel access to Ohio research infrastructure relating to the development electronic and cyber warfare capabilities. I cannot express how distressing this is to hear, that we would put ourselves in such a vulnerable position with a foreign entity. An entity which was flagged as a top espionage threat by the NSA in 2007 (https://www.newsweek.com/israel-flagged-top-spy-threat-us-new-snowdennsa-document-262991?utm_source=chatgpt.com). Israel most certainly has the capabilities to target U.S. interests covertly and we cannot take up ties with them when our data, and infrastructure is on the line.

Additionally, I am concerned of the lack of restrictions or oversight on the funding of this commission. The bill states that the commission "May solicit and accept gifts, grants, donations, or other funds from public or private sources." This language is vague and allows corporations, foreign governments, and private donors to fund the commission, with no restrictions on military or political involvement, and no disclosure requirements. This is concerning because of the potential for corporate interests to take over the mission of the commission. I want to know how my government is funding cyber warfare initiatives and the risks that may pose to me and my data.

It terrifies me what this bill could mean for Ohioans' surveillance and cybersecurity. There is too much wrong with this bill and too much at risk for Ohio. This bill risks more than money, it risks its data, infrastructure, and democratic integrity. I urge you to do your job to protect Ohio. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on HB 291.

Best,

Eden Truax