

Chair Hall, Vice Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Holly Braun, and I am an educator from the Dayton area. I have lived in Ohio for eleven years and I am a parent of 5.

I. Self-fulfilling prophecy

If we have millions of poor, sick, illiterate immigrants in America, they will clog our jails, drain our public funds, and take our jobs.

However, if we have millions of middle-class, strong, skilled immigrants in America, our economy will grow. There will be more customers, better products in stores, and high stock market returns. Education is the path to the middle class, to strength, to skill and prosperity for us all.

If we force schools to report immigrant status to the government, immigrant parents will be afraid to send their children to school. Any lawfully present Latino-heritage parent will be afraid to send their children to school. I would be afraid to send my children!

If these children don't go to school, they cannot become high-bracket tax-paying members of society, and will instead become a burden. Denying education to immigrants and by extension, children of Latino-heritage families, will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I work in elementary schools and I believe HB 42 will create an unsafe, inhospitable environment for my children and students. Here's why.

II. Become a target for unlawful procedures

Any place that reports a high undocumented immigrant population will be a target for ICE. This is a threat to the peace and prosperity of our communities. Incumbent elected officials tend not to fare well when there is widespread discontent.

Due process is not being upheld by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Lawfully present people are being caught up in immigration crackdowns. Children are being separated from their parents. This shows me that anti-immigration leaders do not value human rights. If they do not care about a child's human rights, yours and mine could be next. We all belong to minorities. Danger to one minority group is a threat to everyone.

I am interested in this nation being ruled by laws and I really appreciate data-driven decisions. But if ICE is unconstitutionally denying due process to citizens or anyone who might be a citizen, and they are, I do not want schools to report immigration status to ICE.

III. Immigration is too complicated for raid-style enforcement

The current immigration system is so complicated that it requires a lawyer and a judge to sort it out. People could be lawfully present in this country due to holding a green card, having asylum or refugee status, temporary protected status due to war, disaster, or crisis in their homeland. They could have deferred action for childhood arrivals, they could have protection under the Convention Against Torture, they could be holders of B-1 or B-2 visas, F-1, F-2, M-1, J-1, J-2 visas. They could be skilled workers with an H-1B visa, or temporary agricultural workers with an H-2A visa, or seasonal non-agricultural workers with an H-2B. They could be intra-company transferees with an L-1, or they could be covered by an O visa for those of extraordinary ability. They could have a P visa, which is for athletes or performers. They could have legal status under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which replaced NAFTA. They could have A and G visas for international organizational staff, R-1 visa, B-2 extensions, Q visas for cultural exchange program participants. Immigrants are lawfully present if they have a pending immigration application for asylum, adjustment of status for a green card, extension or change-of-status for a nonimmigrant visa, a Temporary Protected Status application, a Violence Against Women Act self-petition. They could be granted parole into the United States, advance parole, parole for family reunification programs, or parole in place for military families. They could be U visa applicants for victims of qualifying crimes or T visa applicants for trafficking survivors and more.

I do not think that masked guys from ICE are going to make lawful decisions. Chair Hall. Vice Chair Ferguson. Ranking Member Humphrey. Do you know where they are taking these people? Can you verify their safety and health?

IV. Asylum is a Moral imperative

In 1939, there was a ship named the St. Louis with 937 Jews heading for safety in the USA after applying for visas. They were turned away in Cuba, and they were turned away in Florida. They were told they needed to wait for their immigration applications to be processed. We sent them back to Europe. At least 254 of them died in the Holocaust. Asylum laws are a moral imperative.

V. Citizen Reporting is dangerous

Nazis were able to execute between 11 and 17 million people because their own neighbors reported on them. This bill mandates citizen reporting. Teachers, principals, and students are neighbors. We don't want to start citizen reporting in our country because petty quarrels between neighbors turn into dangerous legal jeopardy with consequences to life and liberty. Opening the door to citizen reporting could also have negative effects during a political campaign.

You have the chance to take a step towards a surveillance state, or to stop it in Ohio. I ask you to consider how you want your descendants to view your role in the destruction or preservation of American privacy and safety.

I. Amend to remove schools

I call on you to amend this bill to remove schools from reporting requirements. Children have nothing to do with the immigration status of their parents. Keeping them from being safe in school and denying them an education will not help our immigration problem and will have a negative long-term impact on our state.