



Council on American-Islamic Relations, Ohio

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Opponent Testimony: H.B. 42

CAIR-Ohio

Room 018

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Chairman Hall, Vice Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Caisha Abdullahi, and I serve as the Government Relations Coordinator for CAIR-Ohio, a statewide civil rights organization that works to protect the rights and dignity of all Ohioans.

I am here today to express our strong opposition to House Bill 42.

This bill would require schools, law enforcement agencies, correctional institutions, county departments of job and family services, and the Department of Medicaid to classify and report the citizenship or immigration status of the people they serve. While HB 42 may appear administrative on its face, it raises significant concerns for civil rights, community trust, and the wellbeing of immigrant and mixed-status families across Ohio.

First, HB 42 is **unnecessary**. Many parts of state government already collect immigration information when it is relevant, because federal law requires it and regulates how it must be done. Benefit programs already verify eligibility through federal systems, and every individual booked into a jail has their identity checked against federal immigration databases. This bill does not fill a gap or fix a problem. Instead, it **duplicates existing processes** and creates new reporting burdens without delivering any meaningful public benefit.

Second, the bill will **discourage families from accessing essential services**. When parents hear that schools or county agencies are tracking immigration details, even families who are fully eligible for services may back away from enrolling their children in school, applying for food assistance, or seeking medical care. The result is not improved efficiency or safety, it is **fear, confusion, and disengagement** from programs that help families stay stable, healthy, and connected to their communities.

Third, HB 42 raises serious **civil rights concerns**. Requiring agencies to categorize individuals by immigration status increases the risk of profiling and discriminatory treatment. Without guidance or training, staff may rely on appearance, accents, names, or perceived ethnicity when making assumptions about immigration status. This places Black immigrants, Muslim refugees, asylum seekers, and mixed-status families at heightened risk of being misidentified or treated differently. The bill contains **no safeguards** to prevent these harms.

Fourth, HB 42 imposes a significant administrative burden on already strained public institutions. Schools and county agencies lack the legal expertise required to interpret the complex immigration categories used in federal law. Expecting them to accurately classify



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individuals into these categories is unrealistic and will increase administrative costs, create confusion, and expose agencies to errors — particularly when handling highly sensitive personal information. Centralizing this data at the state level each year, without a clear purpose or privacy protections, only magnifies these risks.

Ohio faces urgent challenges such as workforce shortages, healthcare gaps, and rising needs in education and social services. HB 42 addresses none of these. Instead, it redirects limited resources and sends an alarming message to immigrant communities who contribute enormously to our economy, our schools, and our neighborhoods. **Policies that erode trust and stigmatize families do not make Ohio stronger.**

For these reasons, CAIR-Ohio respectfully urges the committee to **reject House Bill 42**. It is unnecessary, harmful, and inconsistent with the values of fairness, dignity, and equal treatment that Ohioans expect from their public institutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.