



Opponent Testimony for House Bill 1
Submitted by: Arianna Kelawala
Organization: OPAWL
Testifying as Opponent

Chair Abrams, Vice-Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas and Members of the Ohio House Public Safety Committee

My name is Arianna Kelawala, I live in Columbus, and I am an organizer with OPAWL Building AAPI Feminist Leadership. We are an organization that represents over 300 AAPI people across the state and are asking this committee to oppose House Bill 1 which unfairly targets immigrant communities under the pretense of national security. These bills revive the discriminatory history of Alien Land Laws, which have been ruled unconstitutional and have long been used to suppress Asian, Muslim and immigrant communities.

In addition to its deeply harmful economic impacts, by restricting land ownership based on nationality, H.B. 1 fosters racial profiling and discourages immigrants from contributing to Ohio's economy through land and home ownership. Furthermore, they may violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, opening the state to costly litigation.

OPAWL represents AAPI people from all across Ohio and laws like House Bill 1, a modern day Alien Land Law, were used to discriminate against Asian immigrants and Asian Americans throughout history in the United States. On May 3, 1913, California enacted the Alien Land Law, designed to deny Japanese families their foothold in America by denying them the right to own land after Japanese farmers began cultivating land and building the vineyards that produce California's wine today. The law was tightened in 1920 and 1927 to bar Asian immigrants, their American-born children, and even corporations run by Asian immigrants from leasing and owning land. These laws set the precedent of discrimination that would then allow Japanese people to be wrongly sent into internment camps during World War II under the name of national security.

General inquiries: info@opawl.org
Social media: [@teamOPAWL](https://twitter.com/teamOPAWL)
www.opawl.org



All Ohioans understand that national security is deeply important. But, this law greatly inflates the threat that immigrants pose to our communities. These are individuals that migrate to this country, often fleeing regimes of facism and dictatorship, in search of the promise of democracy and safety. These individuals are not a threat to us and our communities, and instead make our communities richer in culture and economically too. Though the bill does not bar individuals from these nationalities from our country, the Ohio Legislative Service Commission determined that few if any areas of the state would not be within 25 miles of one or the other of these types of properties. I worry about our members, some who have immigrated from China, excited to settle down in Ohio and begin building a family here in our beautiful state. Will these families be able to have the opportunity to purchase a home? The American dream should not come with caveats based on nationality.

I urge you to vote NO on House Bill 1 to ensure Ohio remains a prosperous and welcoming state for all its residents. Thank you for your time.