

Testimony Against Ohio House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 88

House Public Safety Committee

May 19, 2025

Honorable Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and Esteemed Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Lei Li, a proud resident of Ohio, and I strongly oppose House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 88.

For over 30 years, my husband and I have called Ohio home as permanent residents. We arrived as young adults, earned degrees from American universities, and dedicated 20-30 years to careers in government and major corporations. We've paid the same taxes as citizens, raised our family here, and built a life we cherish. We share America's values of fairness and equality with loved ones in China, celebrating the opportunities this nation offers.

Yet, House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 88 threaten to deny green card holders like us the right to buy property in the state we've called home for decades. By equating permanent residents with temporary visitors, these bills undermine our contributions and feel profoundly unjust.

We've held green cards for over 20 years but have not pursued U.S. citizenship—not from lack of love for this country, but out of necessity. Our parents, all in their 90s, live in China and are frail. If they fall critically ill, we must be at their bedside. China denies U.S. citizens visa-on-arrival, and Ohio residents must travel 9-10 hours to New York's consulate for a visa, a process taking days. The journey home—by plane, train, and bus—takes another 24 hours. For dying parents, this delay could mean missing their final moments.

Worse, we distrust China's government to issue visas promptly to U.S. citizens. During the three years of COVID-19, China halted visas for Chinese-American friends, leaving them stranded, grieving across an ocean as their parents passed away. We refuse to risk such heartbreak. We plan to pursue U.S. citizenship after our parents pass, but until then, we must retain Chinese citizenship to reach them in time.

These bills disregard our decades of taxpaying, law-abiding contributions. Denying us property rights afforded to other immigrants feels discriminatory. Is it the intent to penalize legal immigrants who've devoted half their lives to Ohio?

I respectfully urge you to exempt green card holders from House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 88. Honor our sacrifices and belief in the American Dream. We seek only equal treatment—to own a home and continue contributing to the nation we love.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Lei Li, Green card holder and Resident of Ohio