

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 1
House Committee on Public Safety
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My name is Victoria Hickcox, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of YUSRA, a grassroots, Muslim-led coalition dedicated to justice, equity, and opportunity for all communities across Ohio.

We write in strong opposition to House Bill 1, the so-called “Ohio Property Protection Act.”

This bill may be framed as a matter of national security, but let’s be clear: HB 1 is a discriminatory and unconstitutional attempt to restrict land ownership based on national origin. It echoes the dark legacy of “alien land laws” once used to dispossess Japanese, Chinese, and South Asian immigrants in this country — laws that have since been widely condemned as racist and unconstitutional.

HB 1 paints broad categories of people as threats simply because of where they’re from — even if they live, work, raise families, and pay taxes in Ohio. Under this bill, our neighbors, our students, our elders could be banned from owning property near infrastructure (which is so broad, it essentially bans affected individuals from purchasing real estate) and military bases — not because of any wrongdoing, but because of their identity. **This is dangerous and unacceptable.**

Communities across Ohio — many of which include immigrants or children of immigrants — know what it feels like to be viewed with suspicion. We have seen how fear-mongering has led to surveillance, detention, and exclusion. HB 1 continues that harmful pattern and grants sweeping power to local law enforcement to investigate and report land transfers — opening the door to harassment, profiling, and abuse.

We’re also concerned that the bill:

- Violates constitutional guarantees of equal protection and due process
- Delegates foreign policy decisions to state officials
- Chills economic participation and housing access for immigrant communities
- Encourages racial profiling in real estate transactions

At a time when we should be building inclusive and thriving communities, HB 1 fuels division and fear. Instead of protecting Ohioans, it undermines our values and our rights.

YUSRA urges this committee to reject HB 1 in its entirety. Thank you for your time and consideration.