

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 1
Submitted by: Cherice Chan, Resident of Lucas County
Testifying as Opponent

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Cherice Chan and I am here to express my strong opposition to House Bill 1 (HB1).

I am an American citizen who was born and raised in Toledo, Ohio. After living on both the East and West Coast for several years, I have recently returned to live and work in my hometown. I am a registered Ohio voter and I am proud to call Ohio my home. I am also proud to identify as a second generation Chinese American. I am a child of Chinese immigrants who migrated to the United States in the 1980s. Both of my parents are naturalized American citizens who have lived and worked in Ohio for over 30 years, serving as faculty members for one of Ohio's public universities. I am also one of the [over 70,000](#) Chinese Americans, [over 398,000](#) Asian Americans, and [over 1 million](#) immigrants or children of immigrants who live in Ohio.

I have deep concerns about HB1 and how it will significantly harm the Chinese American, Asian American, and the broader immigrant community in Ohio. This bill aims to prohibit individuals from China, Russia, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, and North Korea from owning land in the state. The language of HB1 targets specific communities not based on any evidence of wrongdoing or malintent, but solely because of their nationality or country of origin. It directly threatens the property rights of many innocent community members in Ohio – including green card holders, permanent residents, international students, foreign workers, and other lawful immigrants.

I am particularly alarmed that HB1 would fuel further racial profiling, suspicion, and discrimination against Chinese Americans, Asian Americans, and other immigrant communities. By specifically targeting individuals from China and other “foreign adversaries”, the bill reinforces the harmful and racist stereotype that all immigrants from China, Russia, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, and North Korea come to this country with the intent of serving as potential spies or government agents. In reality, the overwhelming majority of immigrants, including my parents, chose to come to Ohio for a better life: to find work, pursue an education, and raise families.

The COVID-19 pandemic has already shown how language framing a specific nationality as a threat can significantly harm a racial/ethnic community. Accusations that the coronavirus was a uniquely “Asian” or “Chinese” virus have been [linked](#) to an extreme spike in hate crimes and racial discrimination against Chinese nationals, Chinese Americans, and the broader Asian American community. According to the [FBI](#), the number of federally recognized hate crime incidents against Asian Americans increased from 158 in 2019 to 746 in 2021. In addition, between March 2020 and May 2023, the organization [Stop AAPI Hate](#) received more than

11,000 self-reported incidents of anti-Asian harassment, bullying, and shunning. These figures do not even include the many incidents that were not officially reported. As a result of the recent rise in anti-Chinese and anti-Asian rhetoric, we have had to live in constant fear of being discriminated against, victimized, and attacked. We know from our lived experience that proposals like HB1 will only fuel additional hostility and discrimination against our community.

This increased threat of racism is deeply personal to me, as I experienced frequent harassment growing up because of my Asian heritage. During the COVID-19 pandemic, my family members and friends faced a surge in anti-Asian harassment—including being ignored, followed, and verbally attacked in public spaces. Racial discrimination remains a daily reality for the majority of Chinese Americans. For example, over [⅔ of Chinese Americans report](#) facing at least one form of discrimination per month. In addition, almost [⅔ of Chinese Americans believe](#) the worsening state of U.S.-China relations negatively impacts how other Americans treat them. Our experiences with racial discrimination are not isolated incidents involving a few prejudiced individuals—they are symptoms of a broader society that systematically marginalizes people based on their appearance or national origin through actions like discriminatory legislation.

HB1 echoes and revives the shameful, discriminatory history of Alien Land Laws. Similar to this proposed bill, [Alien Land Laws](#) denied property rights to Chinese and Japanese immigrants solely based on their race and country of origin. These laws were enacted in the same time period as the [Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882](#), the first and only federal law to prohibit a specific ethnic group from entering the United States, and the widespread [lynching of Chinese laborers](#). In other words, these Alien Land Laws not only prevented Asian Americans from owning property, but they contributed to a hostile and dangerous environment that cost the lives of dozens of innocent Chinese Americans. The proposed HB1 takes us back over 100 years in American history, an era tainted by widespread legalized discrimination and violence against Chinese Americans, Asian Americans, and immigrant communities as a whole.

Proposed laws like HB1 contradict the core American value that all people are created equal, no matter their background. The U.S. Supreme Court [ruled Alien Land Laws unconstitutional](#) in 1952, and such legislation also violates the [Fair Housing Act of 1968](#), which prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, or financing of housing based on national origin, race, or ethnicity. HB1 unfairly targets specific immigrant communities and strips individuals of equal opportunity under the false pretense of national security. Legislation aimed to enhance national security should make all members of our communities feel safer. However, this bill leaves thousands of Ohio residents feeling deeply unsafe, vulnerable, and powerless. HB1 sends our community a disgraceful message that Chinese Americans, Asian Americans, and all immigrants are perpetual foreigners and undeserving of the same rights of all of other Americans.

I urge you to vote NO on HB1 to ensure Ohio remains a welcoming state for all its residents, including our strong, diverse immigrant community. Thank you for your time.