

Testimony Against HB1  
Submitted by Sam Cao

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

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am a 20-year-old student who was born and raised in the United States. I stand before you today in strong opposition to House Bill 1, which would ban Chinese nationals from purchasing property in Ohio.

Let me start by sharing a little about my family. My parents came to this country decades ago—my mother is now a U.S. citizen and a professor here in Ohio. My father, a computer scientist, holds a green card after years of waiting. Like so many immigrants, they came to the United States not just for opportunity but to contribute. And they have—through education, innovation, and community building. Ohio didn't lose out to China—it gained talent, hard work, and a new generation ready to give back.

That includes me.

When I first heard about HB1, I was shocked. I thought we had learned from history. But here we are again.

In 1882, the United States passed the Chinese Exclusion Act—the first federal law to ban immigration based on race and nationality. In the early 1900s, alien land laws prohibited Asian immigrants from owning property in many states, including right here in the Midwest. These laws were rooted in fear, racism, and xenophobia—not facts.

And yet, in 2025, we are seeing terrible parts of history repeat itself.

It is deeply painful to witness a bill like HB1 being considered—especially during Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, when we are supposed to celebrate the contributions of Asian Americans, not demonize them.

Let's be clear—this bill is not about national security. It is not about protecting farmland. It is about scapegoating and is in fact even more extreme than its counterpart bills in other states. It is about racial profiling. It tells Chinese nationals—and, by extension, all of us who look like them—that we don't belong. That we are threats, not neighbors. That we are foreign, no matter how long we've lived, worked, studied, or paid taxes in this country.

It is racist. And it is wrong.

I want to also zoom out and look at the big picture. If such a bill of this caliber that has devastating effects for certain Americans passes, make no mistake that this opens the door for other groups to be profiled and targeted as well in the future.

I speak today as a proud Chinese American. I was born in this country. I love this country. And I know that laws like this don't make us safer—they make us smaller. They make us meaner. They make us forget who we are.

I urge this committee not to pass this bill. Stand on the right side of history. Reject fear. Reject discrimination. And focus on the real issues facing our communities—affordable housing, healthcare, jobs—not imaginary threats from our Chinese neighbors.

Today, I choose to stand in solidarity with the Chinese community and all immigrant communities in Ohio. Because this is not just about Chinese nationals. It's about who we are becoming as a state.

Please don't let us go backward. Vote no on HB1.

Thank you.