

Testimony Against HB1
Submitted by Hongmei Li

May 18, 2025

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

My name is Hongmei Li and I am now working in the field of higher education in Ohio. I am submitting this testimony **in my personal capacity as a concerned citizen** who is deeply opposed to House Bill 1 in its entirety.

As someone who has devoted my career to teaching, mentoring, and contributing to academic and public life, I am alarmed by the discriminatory implications of HB1. This bill unfairly targets individuals based on their country of origin, regardless of their intentions, actions, or contributions to our communities.

In my role, I work with many international faculty members, researchers, and graduate students who have chosen to live, work, and build lives in Ohio. These individuals are vital to our educational institutions and our economy. They teach in our classrooms, drive innovation through research, support local businesses, and pay taxes like any other resident. HB1 will push many of these valuable colleagues to consider leaving Ohio or prevent others from ever coming here. It will also deprive our students of the opportunity to learn from the best minds around the world.

I speak from personal experience. I immigrated to the United States, became a naturalized U.S. citizen, and chose Ohio as my home. I pay taxes, contribute to public life, and have proudly dedicated my career to educating students in this state. My story is one of many. If HB1 had been law when I first arrived, I might never have been able to settle here, invest in a home, or give back to the community as I do now.

HB1 is not only unfair—it is short-sighted. It threatens to undermine Ohio's reputation as a welcoming, inclusive, and forward-looking state. It would harm our universities, weaken our economy, and send the wrong message to the world: that Ohio does not value the contributions of those who come here seeking to build a better life.

I urge you to consider the long-term damage this bill will cause. I stand strongly **against HB1 in its entirety**. It is unjust, economically harmful, and will force many individuals—people who are already invested in Ohio—to move away. It risks isolating us from the global talent and partnerships that drive growth and excellence.

It is ironic that you are considering this bill in the AAPI Month when you are supposed to celebrate the contributions of the Asian American communities, including the Chinese community. However, you are now considering a dangerous bill that will do tremendous harm to the Chinese and Asian American communities.

Please reject HB1 and choose a future for Ohio that is open, fair, and welcoming to all.

Sincerely,

Hongmei Li