

Testimony Against Senate Bill 88

Submitted by Robin Evans

Testifying as Opponent

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Chair Roegner, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and Members of the Senate General Government Committee,

My name is Robin Evans. I am a proud U.S. citizen. I represent myself to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 88.

Weaponizing Xenophobia: The Dangerous Path of Senate Bill 88

Senate Bill 88 seeks to restrict individuals from certain foreign nations from purchasing property near military bases or critical infrastructure. While presented as a national security measure, this bill is, in reality, a deeply flawed and discriminatory policy that undermines constitutional rights, damages our economy, and echoes some of the darkest chapters in American history.

1. A Direct Assault on Civil Liberties

Let's be clear: this bill does not target foreign governments, it targets people. It strips individuals of the right to purchase property solely based on their national origin, violating the Fair Housing Act and the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection under the law. We've seen this before during Japanese internment, the Red Scare, and McCarthyism. We must ask ourselves: are we really prepared to repeat these mistakes?

2. National Security in Name Only

The notion that private citizens purchasing homes pose a national security threat is not supported by evidence. If the concern is espionage, the solution lies in effective intelligence and counterintelligence operations, not in discriminatory real estate bans. Spies do not need to purchase homes to conduct surveillance in the digital age. This bill is more about optics than safety.

3. Economic Harm to Americans

Restricting property sales to entire groups of people will directly harm American sellers, real estate professionals, and local economies. In many parts of the state, foreign investment provides much-needed capital for development and revitalization. Blocking immigrants from lawful real estate transactions doesn't protect Americans, it penalizes them.

4. Diplomatic and Global Consequences

This bill sends a hostile message to the global community, especially to countries like China, with whom the U.S. maintains complex and critical economic ties. Discriminatory laws invite retaliation and risk straining diplomatic relationships, ultimately harming American and Ohio's industries, agriculture, and trade.

5. A Slippery Slope to Greater Injustice

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of this bill is its potential to set a dangerous precedent. If we allow government policy to dictate who can own property based on nationality, what comes next? Employment bans? Restrictions on residency or education? History shows us that such steps lead to systemic repression, not safety.

I urge this committee to vote NO on Senate Bill 88 in its entirety.

We must not let fear override our principles. Let Ohio stand on the side of equality, fairness, and constitutional integrity.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.