

Testimony Against Senate Bill 88

Submitted by: Dr. ZHOU, Chaohui

Testifying as Opponent

May 25, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 88. My name is **ZHOU Chaohui**, and I live in the Cleveland area with my husband and two children. I currently work at a leading Chemical company on an **L1 visa**. My husband volunteers at **Benjamin Rose**, a nonprofit organization serving elderly residents in our community.

I came to the United States over 20 years ago and earned a **Ph.D. in Materials Engineering** from **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**. My first job was in Boston. I later returned to Shanghai with my family for many years before relocating to Cleveland in 2023. Throughout my career, I've held various industrial R&D roles—from Scientist to Technology Director—at multinational companies. I've led teams in different regions driving innovation deliveries to enhance business competitiveness. One of the key traits of high-performing teams is **diversity**, which fosters creativity, resilience, and better decision-making.

We chose to settle in Cleveland because of its rich diversity. At any local playground or park, we often see families from at least three different ethnic backgrounds. Although I'm not a neuroscientist, I understand that children's brain development is profoundly shaped by the people they interact with. Greater diversity fosters flexible thinking, empathy, and cognitive growth. It took time for our children to adjust to the new environment, but over the past two years, we've seen them grow and thrive — it seems we made the right decision.

During our first year, we rented a duplex, which provided a smooth transition before purchasing our home last year. Since then, we've done a few major renovation projects to make it our own. We've also discovered the joy of yard work—something we never experienced while renting.

While I recognize the importance of national security, I believe this bill is **overreaching**. It loses focus and, whether intentionally or not, targets a group of lawful individuals based on **discrimination**. As many of you know, individuals on work or student visas undergo extensive vetting to ensure they pose no security risk. Although the current list includes six

“adversary” countries, it can be amended every six months—and could grow. This sets a dangerous precedent, infringing on **constitutional rights** and undermining **equality**, a core American value.

If Ohio chooses to abandon this value, it will not be surprising to see a rise in discrimination across more areas of life and work, especially for those who are not considered part of the mainstream. Those affected—directly or indirectly—may choose to leave. This would not only harm the **local economy** but also reduce **diversity**, making Ohio less competitive. Ohio children would be at a disadvantage when applying to colleges or entering the workforce. This reminds me of **J.D. Vance’s *Hillbilly Elegy***, which deeply moved me. It describes how children from middle-class families struggled with poverty and hardship as the local economy faded.

We all want to raise our children in a fair society with real opportunities. Those of us who come here legally and work hard to support our families bring tremendous value to the local communities—we deserve to be treated equally without the fear of losing our properties. That is a basic human right.

I respectfully urge you to consider the following amendments to Senate Bill 88 to ensure it upholds both national security and the constitutional rights of lawful residents in Ohio:

- 1) **Exempt** the lawful residents including visa holders.
- 2) Limit the **scope** of restrictions and exclude residential properties
- 3) Establish a formal **appeals process** for affected parties
- 4) Include a **sunset clause** or require periodic legislative review

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

ZHOU, Chaohui