

Written Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 88

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Fairborn Resident

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 88. I write with deep respect for your public service and a heartfelt concern for the bill's potential impact on my students, my family, and Ohio's future.

I am a mother of two, and a teacher with 17 years in Ohio schools. Each day begins at 5:30 a.m. as I prepare to teach at a Title I high-need urban high school—where the words “liberty and justice for all” from the morning pledge still echo in my mind. After school, I cheer on my son, recently promoted to his varsity tennis team, then rush my daughter to her gymnastics practice. She dreams of one day competing for Ohio. At night, we read *All Are Welcome*, a storybook whose cover features seven smiling children of different races and backgrounds. Lately, when I turn its pages, my hand trembles. I find myself wondering: is the promise in that title still true? Will my children's future be defined by their work ethic—or by how their name sounds and the color of their skin?

Senate Bill 88—and House Bill 1—fail to distinguish between foreign governments and law-abiding individuals who live, work, and contribute to our communities under lawful immigration status. These include permanent residents (green card holders), professionals on H-1B or L-1 visas, and international students on F-1 visas. Senate Bill 88 goes further by requiring individuals from designated countries to sell their homes within two years. These measures disregard our constitutional protections, including equal protection and property rights. They risk fracturing our communities and leaving lasting damage on Ohio's economy, research institutions, and reputation for welcoming global talent.

If word spreads that Ohio is unfriendly—even to lawful immigrants—engineers, researchers, small business owners, and entrepreneurs will look elsewhere. Asian-American students and employees may feel increasingly unsafe, isolated, and targeted in the place they call home.

As an educator who understands the history of the Alien Land Laws and the Chinese Exclusion Act, I urge you to stand on the right side of history. I have learned how figures like California Governor Hiram Johnson and Attorney General Ulysses Webb championed laws now remembered for their legacy of exclusion. I ask you: how will you be remembered? As someone who defended fairness and dignity of all Ohioans—or someone whose legacy reflected fear, division, and discrimination? Would your children or grandchildren feel proud—or ashamed—to be associated with you or with Ohio?

I also write to you as a mother who worries deeply about our children's safety. In December 2014, Emilie Olsen, a 13-year-old Chinese-American student at Fairfield Middle School in Ohio, died by suicide after enduring relentless bullying. In 2023, Abyesh Thulung of Akron Public Schools died in similar circumstances after repeated bullying and mistreatment. These tragedies continue to haunt our community. If this bill passes, I fear it will encourage further discrimination and increase the already disproportionate bullying Asian-American students face in schools.

I respectfully urge the Committee to vote **No** on Senate Bill 88—or, at the very least, to consider these amendments:

1. **Remove all language that prohibits individuals from purchasing primary or investment properties.** If Ohio benefits from a person's taxes and contributions, it should not deny them the opportunity to invest in the community they strengthen.
2. **Explicitly exempt permanent residents, visa holders, and international students.** As written, the bill could group green card holders who have lived in Ohio for decades with foreign adversaries. That outcome is neither just nor reasonable.
3. **Affirm the right of law-abiding immigrants to own property as a path toward stability and community-building,** aligned with Ohio's economic interests and America's founding ideals.

I respectfully urge you to vote **No** on Senate Bill 88 and affirm the values I teach every day—that in Ohio, and in America, all are truly welcome.

Thank you for your time and consideration.