

Hey. I'm Felix, an Asian American living on "protected property". I really did not want to write this, because I usually try to stay FAR away from all this government nonsense. However, the urgency of both my parents and how outrageous this bill is made me step in. My family has been raving about it all week, and for good reason. What could possibly convince us, as American citizens, to give up our home that we've lived in for a decade now?

Our protected territory is the home of Asian Americans in Ohio. This has been our owned and maintained protected territory for years. The fact that it has a terrene identity ensures our culture because annually, this is where we host the Asian American Heritage Festival. The dragon dance and tai chi promote culture and cuisine while trivia and volunteer painting cleanups educate others to foster understanding of our stance in this state. This is a protected territory that solidifies our past and expands into the future.

Senate Bill 88 would violate that protection. The bill is constructed in such a way that if protected status is disabled, the area can become subject to new construction, displacements, and extenuating red tape that can change the nature already established on site. Thus, the identity will change forever. This is a place where we come together every year to celebrate the heritage of where we came from and what we can give back—forever changing this identity will strip away what we have to offer and complicate community gatherings for us at best.

As an Asian American, I understand this bill seeks to limit the protections of land ownership for all, but it knows no demographic distinction. We have been discriminated against for centuries. We are lower income than most households; we are underserved and underrepresented. This bill can only add to that foolishness. If we're property owners (of which history would suggest we are), then this is another way the state can keep us down with a bill that shows us that special protections that have taken generations to set into place can always be taken away. We do not have the funds to litigate should such offenses occur down the line, so why should we worry about them coming to fruition? Our properties are signs of stability and resiliency—even if with delinquent value—and this bill goes against such an idea.

Thus, I urge your support as a member of this committee because you must listen to the minority voices of Asian Americans and other communities that would be victimized by this bill. We need our cultural heritage to remain protected; we need our rights to property to be acknowledged. Ohio is a great state because of diversity. Legislation should follow suit by keeping in mind the history of what makes us who we are instead of ripping it away.

Please say no to Ohio Senate Bill 88, and yes to legislation that promotes inclusivity, equity, and empathy. Thank you for your time and consideration.