

Testimony in Opposition to Ohio House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 88

Good afternoon, Members of the Committee.

My name is Shan Bai, and I am a proud resident of Ohio. I immigrated to the United States 20 years ago and moved to Ohio just last year from Georgia. I've quickly grown to love this new community and hope to build a life here with my family. I hold a permanent resident Green Card, and I am the father of two daughters — both born in the United States — one currently in college and the other in high school. Like many immigrants before me, I came to this country seeking opportunity, safety, and the chance to contribute to a community that I could one day call home.

I am here today to respectfully voice my strong opposition to House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 88.

While I recognize and appreciate the stated intention of these bills — to protect Ohio's critical infrastructure, agricultural assets, and military interests — I am deeply concerned about the broad, sweeping nature of these proposals and the harmful, unintended consequences they would have on families like mine and the diverse communities we cherish in this state.

Property ownership is one of the most fundamental expressions of the American Dream. For immigrants, owning a home, a business property, or farmland is not just about wealth — it represents stability, belonging, and a tangible stake in the community. These bills risk undermining that dream by painting with too broad a brush, restricting property rights based on national origin rather than individual merit, legal status, or intent.

The language in House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 88 would unfairly restrict lawful residents and legal immigrants, like myself, from the opportunity to fully participate in Ohio's economy and society. Many immigrants in Ohio are hardworking, tax-paying residents who contribute to our neighborhoods, schools, and local economies. By conflating lawful residents and legal property owners with foreign adversaries, these bills send a message that some of us — despite following every rule and investing our lives in this state — will never be fully welcome.

I also worry about the chilling effect these bills would have on our state's reputation as a place of opportunity and fairness. Ohio is home to thousands of immigrant families, international students, researchers, and entrepreneurs. Legislation that discriminates based on foreign citizenship or national origin could deter investment, innovation, and the next generation of Ohioans who wish to call this state home.

Furthermore, these bills risk violating basic principles of fairness and due process by imposing restrictions on property ownership based on national origin, rather than individual actions or legitimate security concerns. There are already federal safeguards in place to review and block property acquisitions that pose genuine national security risks. Adding redundant,

discriminatory layers at the state level does little to enhance security while doing much to alienate law-abiding residents.

In closing, I urge you to reconsider the broad scope of these bills. It is possible to protect Ohio's strategic assets without infringing upon the rights and dignity of innocent, hardworking people who have chosen to invest their lives and futures here. I respectfully ask this committee to oppose House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 88 in their current form.

Thank you for your time, your service to our state, and for considering the voices of immigrant families like mine.

Sincerely,

Shan Bai

Plain City, Ohio