

Opposition Testimony of Michelle Huang HB6
House Workforce & Higher Education Committee

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the Senate Central Government Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Michelle Huang, and I am a student, athlete, and lifelong Ohioan. I've certainly made my fair share of appearances in the past few months, but what I'm most known for in my community is the fact that I have had the privilege of representing the United States on the national Kung Fu team, competing on behalf of this country and winning medals and bringing facets of my community to multiple international competitions. That journey began here in Ohio: specifically in a small studio founded by my coach, a Chinese immigrant whose ability to own property near a stretch of suburban road made my athletic career possible.

Under this legislation, that opportunity would have never existed.

Because of the disastrous implications this bill has on the civil liberties of a community trying to be a part of the American story, I'm here today to express my strong opposition to House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 88.

These bills purport to protect Ohio's infrastructure and land, but their language does something else entirely. They deny individuals the right to own property based not on their conduct, character, or intentions—but on their citizenship status. The provision barring individuals who are citizens of so-called "foreign adversaries," including China, from owning land within 25 miles of "critical infrastructure" is not only overbroad: it is purely discriminatory.

The term "critical infrastructure" is defined so loosely under federal guidelines that it encompasses much of the state: highways, power lines, even railways and municipal facilities. This means that vast areas of Ohio are effectively off-limits to immigrants from specific countries, regardless of whether they have lived here for decades, paid taxes, built businesses, or contribute meaningfully to our communities and the Ohio economy. It even affects those with dual citizenship or lawful permanent resident status.

This is not protection. It is exclusion. And it sets a dangerous precedent.

For my family and many others in the Chinese American community, property ownership is more than a transaction; it is a symbol of permanence, of belonging, and of trust in the American promise. We are doctors, educators, researchers, and entrepreneurs. We contribute to the Ohio economy, support our local communities, and instill the values of hard work and civic duty in our children.

This bill threatens to undermine all of that.

The idea that property protection should involve depriving individuals, legally present and contributing members of society, of the right to own land flies in the face of our foundational values. Property ownership is a core American freedom. It is protected not just in law, but in spirit. To restrict it on the basis of national origin is an extraordinary overreach of government power.

There are legitimate concerns around national security, but those concerns should be addressed through careful, targeted policy; not broad, discriminatory restrictions that penalize innocent individuals based on where they were born. This bill does not distinguish between governments and people. It does not distinguish between threats and neighbors. It casts suspicion on entire communities.

We must not allow fear to override fairness. We must not allow outdated prejudices to shape our modern laws.

I urge you to consider the long-term consequences of this legislation: not only its impact on foreign policy, but on the everyday lives of Ohio families, including mine. I urge you to reject HB1 and SB88.

Thank you.

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