

Testimony Against Senate Bill 88
Submitted by: Di Li
Testifying as Opponent

May 25, 2025

Chair 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 Di Li, and I am a Columbus resident currently pursuing a career in accounting.

I first came to the United States in 2010 to earn my bachelor's degree, followed by a master's degree in 2016. In 2017, I moved to Columbus to begin my professional career in accounting and finance on a work visa. I am currently still waiting—along with many others—for an employment-based green card.

When I first learned about Senate Bill 88 and its companion legislation, I was shocked and disheartened. The United States is a country built by immigrants—people who came here to chase their American dreams. If this bill becomes law, people like me could lose the opportunity to put down roots, build families, and contribute meaningfully to the communities we've come to love.

As a legal immigrant, I have worked hard every step of the way. Many of my friends followed a similar path—from student to work visa to permanent residency—along the way buying homes and starting families right here in Ohio. These bills unfairly target individuals from certain nations—China, Russia, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela—simply based on national origin. This is discriminatory. The United States should stand for **freedom, equality, and diversity—not fear, exclusion, and suspicion**. Legislation like this threatens the very principles that make this country strong.

I've lived in Columbus for nearly eight years. Over that time, I've become deeply involved in my community. I volunteer at events like the **Nationwide Children's Hospital Marathon**, cheering on runners and supporting families in need. I also volunteer at **USA Climbing events** and attend the **Memorial Tournament**, where people from around the country gather to celebrate the golf community. I've built meaningful friendships—people who have become like brothers and sisters to me. As an only child living far from my birth family, these connections mean everything.

Columbus is my second home. And yet, if this bill passes, I may be forced to leave it all behind.

I'm also an avid skier. I still remember the warm conversations I've had with neighbors on the ski lift—when they ask where I'm from, I always proudly say, "Ohio." But if Senate Bill 88 becomes law, I may be forced to leave this state—a state I've loved and contributed to—simply because of where I was born.

I am just one of many ordinary people who are working hard, contributing to our economy, paying taxes, and enriching Ohio's communities. There are thousands like me who want nothing more than to live peacefully, raise families, and give back to the place we now call home. We should not be forced to sell our homes or leave because of our national origin.

Many of you likely have friends or neighbors from countries listed in this bill. Imagine if your child or grandchild had to say goodbye to a close friend because that family was forced to move. How would you explain that loss to them?

During college, I worked as a Resident Assistant and later as a Hall Director for three years. I participated in numerous diversity and inclusion trainings. I learned—and still believe—that America is strongest when it embraces diversity, not when it legislates against it.

This July, Hamilton is coming to Columbus. One of the most famous lines in the show is:

“Immigrants, we get the job done.”

Why would Ohio pass legislation that drives talented, hardworking immigrants away from this great state?

I respectfully urge you to consider my testimony and vote **NO** on Senate Bill 88. Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration.

Sincerely,
Di Li
Columbus, OH