

April 24, 2017

Representative Ryan Smith  
Chair, Ohio House Finance Committee  
District 93  
77 S. High St. 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Smith and Finance Committee Members,

I am submitting this as testimony regarding Amendment HC1793 which proposes expansion of Ohio Probate Court powers over ORC 1545 Park Districts. I am writing both as a citizen of Geauga County and has a Trustee of Protect Geauga Parks, a not for profit Conservation Education and Advocacy Organization.

The language in this bill would allow unprecedented power of Probate Judges over local park districts, giving wide ranging and undefined authority to them, creating serious concerns for separation of governmental powers. The language imposes threats to residents who have so-called "interfered" with the purpose or operation of parks, also undefined. This would immediately limit the public's participation in government, a proud fixture and foundation of our American government.

This projected law appears to be significant only to one Ohio county and should not be imposed on the other 87 who are able to function with the limited amount of judicial power as granted in the Ohio Revised Code that has served parks well for many years. There are already mechanisms in place in law to deal with violations in managements of parks – there is no need for further legislation in this area. If there was such a need it should go through a transparent legislative process, not a back door, last minute insertion such as in this case.

Should this language be included in the budget scrutiny will immediately be given to the First, Fourth and Fifth amendments as well as to Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution. This will result in expensive lawsuits and embarrassment to the State of Ohio.

Ohio's County Parks are a treasure for this state. Let us not use them as a political football for personal or political gain.

**I urge you to remove this unnecessary and self-serving amendment from the Budget Bill.**

Sincerely,

Barbara Partington  
12345 Rockhaven Rd.  
Chesterland Ohio 44026

