

Testimony of Nick Teti - SB 33
Senate Judiciary Committee
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Senators, you see before you today a gathering of people who are opposed to policies that you have implemented in their communities. They do not agree with your agenda because your policies are risking and causing harm to their health and essential resources, degrading their quality of life, depriving them of the enjoyment and use of both their privately owned and communal property, and inducing catastrophic changes to our climate systems by changing the chemical composition of our planet's atmosphere. Your response to the concerns of these citizens was to limit their ability to express their grievances in the Ohio State House by restricting their oral testimony to eight people. No such limitations were placed on the proponent testimony in your proceedings.

Dissent is the ultimate expression of individual liberty. It drove the founding fathers to write the Declaration of Independence when all avenues of redress to government injustice were closed to them. History teaches that repression may work for a while but it is a pressure cooker that blows up into social movements and ultimately revolution. As you continue to subordinate human rights to corporate policy and self-interest your disdain for representative government reveals a broken ideology that was soundly rejected only but only after a conflagration that raged across continents and leveled cities. Listen to the following quotes and examine your own actions in resurrecting the tenets of this philosophy:

These words are from screeds by the founders of Fascism; Benito Mussolini and Giovanni Gentile:

“The Fascist conception of life stresses the importance of the State and accepts the individual only in so far as his interests coincide with the State. The Fascist conception of the State is all embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value.”

Contrast these sentiments to this document that speaks to the relationship of individual liberty and the power of the state.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

“From the consent of the governed”; Not from the dictates of corporate power, Not by the permission of the state, Not from a group of legislators who allow Ohio's legislation to be written by a small cabal of campaign donors with narrow interests that preclude the common good. I cannot fathom how you can pass legislation that is so amenable to

a philosophy that stands in such stark contrast to the democratic ideals defined by Jefferson in The Declaration of Independence.

I oppose Senate Bill 33.

The crux of SB 33:

- (1) You are using draconian penalties to exclusively target opponents of government policy towards corporate donors- This legislation is all the more insidious when viewed in the context of gerrymandering and the voter suppression efforts engaged in by Ohio's Attorneys General. Taken together they are a concerted attack on the democratic process.
- (2) Assigning guilt to entire groups expressing opposition to a government policy in response to an individual's independent action.
- (3) You are criminalizing dissent, using vaguely defined transgressions that you can interpret as felonies towards a select group of citizens. You are taking this action to protect a heavily subsidized industry whose lobbyists have been institutionalized as permanent fixtures in your legislative body. They will remain in place stifling opposition to their policies long after you are term limited out to throw their hammers around at a new class of elected officials. Although this abdication to corporate power has been normalized and accepted by this assembly it is corrupt to the core.

I believe you are crossing a line.

You seriously need to examine whether you can continue to fulfill your obligations to abide by the Constitutional imperatives placed upon you as office holders serving the people in a representative democracy. You can't continue to propose corporate dictated legislation in defiance of popular will. Who do you represent; ALEC or the people of Ohio?