

Testimony in Favor of SB 359
November 30, 2020

My name is Linda Harvey and I am president of Mission America.

I enthusiastically support SB 359, legislation that is greatly needed to amend the Ohio Revised Code, in view of the actions of reckless, lawless individuals and groups this past summer throughout the nation and in Ohio.

It is truly appalling that certain groups were allowed to freely riot, to deliberately harm police and first responders, to prevent them from protecting other citizens, to smash businesses and enable looting, to block highways and to damage public property with little or no interference from city governments.

We heard credible reports that here in Columbus, city officials told police to stand down as rioters who claim to be in favor of civil rights created a climate of fear and chaos, freely damaging private and public property, stopping traffic and endangering lives.

Who wants to become a police officer with this kind of support? Very few people and the idea that any cities are seriously considering cutting police budgets is beyond insane. Instead of cutting police budgets, we need to cut the positions and budgets of city councils who abandon their responsibilities in such a flagrant fashion.

When we witness the criminal recklessness some politicians are willing to tolerate, police need more money, not less. First responders need a higher budget and enhanced laws, not lower support and more danger while performing their jobs.

As a woman I am appalled that Democratic Party politicians are willing to endanger women and families by leaving us with the idea that we cannot count on an immediate response to a 911 emergency. No woman wants a social worker talking to them as a rape is in progress. We want and deserve well-trained, well-equipped first responders to stop crimes in progress and chase away or arrest violent offenders.

And police need to know they are not encountering a situation where the mayor can be counted on to later second-guess their decisions as they try to keep people safe.

These first responders need to know that their own lives will not be endangered by criminals who call themselves "peaceful protesters" and know they will receive no punishment for attacking police officers, mischaracterizing their actions and motives, and harassing them and their families.

Who needs "peace" like this? Columbus does not. Ohio does not. Please vote in favor of Senate Bill 359.