



# OHIO FAMILIES UNITE FOR POLITICAL ACTION AND CHANGE

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and Committee Members:

It is an honor to write to you today to uplift the voices that will be suppressed by Senate Bill 185 here in Ohio. My name is Emily Cole, I use she/her pronouns, and I am the Co-Founder and Executive Director of OFUPAC. OFUPAC was started by those most impacted by the criminalization of poverty, police brutality, incarceration and the “so-called” justice system here in Ohio.

The families I represent rarely have a seat at the table yet so often are the voices most critical to the conversation at hand. They disproportionately bear the brunt of the legislative and policy decisions made in this space, given the historical and embedded structural and institutional racism inherent in both Ohio and this nation’s policing and incarceration systems.

We are saddened to have to submit this testimony in opposition of SB 185. We are excited to see our elected officials acknowledge the truth we hold – the Second Amendment is part of the United States Constitution, but not at the expense of the First Amendment. The limiting principles for law enforcement involvement and citizen involvement in citizens’ constitutional held rights and legal avenues of redress *only* apply to the Second Amendment. While citizens will be able to avail themselves to legal and civil redress if their right to bear arms during a protest is violated, the status quo for law enforcement to mame, kill, murder, and act without impunity or redress remains as *qualified immunity is still the law of the law*.

I, and the families OFUPAC represents cherish, hold, and honor the rights protected and enumerated by the United States Constitution First Amendment and Article I, Section 11 of



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the Ohio Constitution. The respect and love of America, Ohio, and constitutional rights afforded to every citizen in this great country is why OFUPAC stands in opposition to SB 185.

The advancement and protections afforded by one constitutional right should not come at the erosion of others. This legislation gives rise to a latent aim which seeks to ensure access to firearms to the general public while preventing potential aid which may be necessary when a breakdown in dialogue occurs and gives rise to dangerous and distressing deadly conditions. It is disheartening to see such reckless disregard for the safety of those who are standing tall in their use of the First Amendment to speak truth to injustice and shine a light on the needs in our communities. This bill would *create* more violence, not reduce it.

We are grateful for your leadership on SB 185 and invite you to continue to carry the torch with us towards true transformative justice by ending the terror and advancement of the desecration of human and constitutional rights under the guise of advancing notions of liberty and constitutional protection.

With hope for all American Constitutional Rights,

Emily Cole

Emily Cole, MPA

Co-Founder & Executive Director

OFUPAC

[www.ofupac.org](http://www.ofupac.org)