

## 5<sup>th</sup> House District

Columbiana County

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## Committees

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### Sponsor Testimony: HR 194 House State and Local Committee

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify as a Joint Sponsor of House Resolution 194. Representative Stoltzfus and I are here today to express our concern for the crimes against religious freedom taking place in our neighboring country of Canada. In the famous words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Artur Pawlowski, a Polish pastor who has made Canada his home, was arrested on February 7th for providing a sermon to the freedom convoy at the U.S.-Canada border. He has since been held in solitary confinement for 23 hours a day and has been denied bail twice. Last week, the Canadian government placed a publication ban on Artur's case.

Artur was not an organizer of the trucker's convoy, he was simply a citizen preaching to peaceful protestors. Unfortunately, as my joint sponsor has mentioned, Artur is not the only Canadian who has been arrested and charged for exercising his rights.

Much like the United States Constitution, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the freedoms of conscience and religion, peaceful assembly, and freedom of the press as fundamental rights. The Canadian government has made it abundantly clear that they do not uphold their constitutional framework the same way that we Americans do.

My joint sponsor and I hope that you will join us in urging the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom to add Canada to the Special Watch List of countries that engage in violations of religious freedom.