

Opening

Thank you Chairman Derrickson, Vice Chairman Ginter, Ranking Member Howse and Members of the Ohio House Community and Family Advancement Committee for this opportunity to address you today.

I am Pastor Neal Dearyan and I represent the Chili Crossroads Bible Church in Fresno, OH.

Body of the testimony

I firmly believe this is an important issue. Pastors fill an important need in the fabric of our society. Protecting their rights to fulfill their God-given duties is critical to any free people. Placing requirements on Ohio clergy to act against our conscience and use Ohio church facilities in a way that goes against our sincerely held religious beliefs would damage us as a state. The very nature of pastoring requires us to follow our conscience, not violate it.

The Bible is the foundation of everything we stand for. As society changes, we are anchored firmly to God's unchanging Word. We are duty-bound not to move one inch from the clear teaching of scripture.

Thank you for protecting our first amendment right to exercise our religion. I am very grateful for your kind consideration and hearing my opinion on this important issue. Thank you for serving us, the citizens of the great state of Ohio.

Closing

Again, I thank you for this opportunity. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.