



Verbal Testimony in Opposition to SB224

Hello, I am here representing the Libertarian Party of Nevada. We oppose SB224 because it is an infringement on freedom of speech.

In 1977 in Skokie Illinois, the ACLU went to court in defense of freedom of speech, on behalf of literal Nazis. They did so not because they agree with National Socialism, but because it was the clearest possible example to illustrate a principle. It requires no bravery to defend someone's right to say something that everyone agrees with.

We must defend the principle of freedom of speech even when it is used for ugliness, because the moments when freedom of speech matters most are the moments when it is hardest to speak out. This bill would criminalize the display of certain symbols "in view of the public" based on the perceived intent of the person making the display. That is clearly and unequivocally a free speech matter.

Crimes are crimes, and will still be punishable without this bill. Vandalism is a crime. Stalking and harassment are crimes. They don't become worse because prejudice is involved. This bill will not create any additional capacity for the state to punish actual criminals. What it will do is jeopardize a foundational principle of this nation in order to signal opposition to ideas and imagery that all reasonable people already agree are repulsive.

Freedom of speech is the bedrock of a free society. Be brave and vote NO on SB227.