

Good morning, Madam Chair Bynum and Members of the committee.

My name is Phillip Wenzel and I am a resident of Washington County. For the past decade, I have worked as a paralegal in the metro area, primarily focused in family law.

On August 14, 2020, I was arrested while lawfully protesting in support of racial equality and police accountability. I am contesting those charges in federal court and cannot talk about the circumstances of my arrest. However, after my arrest I was doxed online and would like to share with you about that experience.

Upon my release from jail on August 15, I turned on my phone to find that the right-wing provocateur and so-called journalist, Andy Ngo, had doxed me on his Twitter account. He shared my booking photo, his own defamatory mischaracterization of events, and my workplace information, including contact information for my employer. This information was published and disseminated to his over 700K followers online, who continued to maliciously disseminate my personal information. This was further amplified when the former Acting Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, Ken Cuccinelli, shared Mr. Ngo's tweet, mocking me personally in his post. It is worth noting, the Portland Police Bureau also posted my name, age, residence information, and charges in a Press Release they shared on their own Twitter account; charges which were later dropped by the Multnomah County District Attorney's office.

Within hours of Mr. Ngo's tweet, the names and ages of all of my family members were shared online, as well as personal phone numbers and identifying information. I received countless death threats to my personal phone, voicemail, and every social media platform I was a part of. After the threats and harassment persisted, my wife and I were forced to disable all our social media accounts, change our phone numbers, and install extra security at our home.

Additionally, my workplace began receiving threats and harassment online intended to cause reputational damage to the firm and induce fear of loss of business. This included bomb threats, which led to the emergency closures of my former employers' offices in Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA. In response to the threats and harassment from right-wing extremists, my boss informed me I was being reprimanded and would be fired if I continued to engage in protests. Eventually, after three of my colleagues quit their jobs in response to the workplace retaliation I received, I was asked to leave the firm.

The totality of these events has been extremely traumatic for me and my family.

Mr. Ngo's intent was clear. He sought to defame, harass and intimidate me by releasing my booking photo and personal information to the public. I support both HB 3047 and HB 3273 as additional deterrents for individuals like Mr. Ngo, to provide further protections for arrested individuals anonymity prior to conviction, and to establish a clear civil cause of action for victims of this type online harassment.

If the Chair or Members of the committee have any questions about my experience that may further inform your work on this bill, I will be happy to answer those. Thank you for your time and consideration.