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On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2851

Dissent to Senate Bill 2851: A Dangerous Overreach

I vehemently dissent from the passage of Senate Bill 2851. This legislation, cloaked in the guise of protecting "critical infrastructure," represents a dangerous overreach of government power and echoes deeply troubling trends of authoritarianism.

The Bill's Overly Broad Definition is a Tool for Suppression:

The expansion of "critical infrastructure" to encompass "terrestrial-based cable or wire communication facilities" is not merely a technical adjustment; it's a weaponization of language. This sweeping definition casts a net so wide it could ensnare virtually any communication line, from major corporate networks to the humble wiring of a local community center. This deliberate ambiguity creates a chilling effect on free speech and assembly, empowering the government to target dissent under the guise of combating "domestic terrorism."

Echoes of Authoritarian Overreach:

This bill arrives at a moment when concerns about executive overreach and the erosion of civil liberties are paramount. The timing and nature of this legislation raise serious questions about its intent. It mirrors the pattern of authoritarian regimes that exploit crises to consolidate power and stifle opposition. By broadening the definition of "domestic terrorism" and "critical infrastructure," this bill provides a legal framework for the suppression of legitimate protest and the silencing of critical voices.

The Erosion of Checks and Balances:

This legislation disregards the fundamental principles of checks and balances that underpin our democracy. By granting the government such broad power to designate and prosecute offenses related to communication infrastructure, it undermines the separation of powers and erodes the safeguards that protect individual liberties.

The Potential for Abuse and Disproportionate Impact:

Without clear standards and safeguards, this bill invites abuse. Its vague language leaves room for selective enforcement, potentially targeting marginalized communities and activists who rely on communication networks to organize and advocate for their rights. The potential for disproportionate impact is undeniable, as

those already vulnerable to government overreach will bear the brunt of this legislation's consequences.

A Call to Defend Liberty:

This bill is not about protecting infrastructure; it's about expanding government power at the expense of fundamental freedoms. We must reject this dangerous overreach and reaffirm our commitment to the principles of liberty, free speech, and the rule of law. I urge you all as representatives and citizens to join me in opposing Senate Bill 2851 and defending the very foundations of our democracy.