

Douglas Elms Senate Testimony

Bill 9

9-12-2023

[1:42:03]

Douglas Elms

Thank you Senators.

My name is Doug Elms, I am a resident of Rogers, Arkansas.

For more than 40 years, I've been in the business of protecting people.

I was a Police Officer here in Little Rock when it was called the most dangerous city in America, small city in America.

I provided security on President Bill Clinton's campaign and other politicians on both sides of the aisles.

I was a founding member of Wal-Mart's Executive Protection Team and a founding member of their Threat Management Team for the entire Global Enterprise of Wal-Mart, the largest company in the world.

Today, I'm the Principal Consultant at SafeHaven Security Group, we're a threat management company based here in Arkansas.

Due to the serious nature of threats against, now, Governor Sanders I was asked to manage the threats during her gubernatorial campaign, and I can tell you it was nothing like I had seen before in my history.

Governor Sanders is not a typical Governor of any state.

She came into this office as one of the most nationally recognized political figures.

And during her time in the White House, as was mentioned, she required Secret Service Protection, which is usually reserved for President, Vice President and Visiting Foreign Dignitaries.

I am a citizen, so I am all for transparency.

And as an Arkansas taxpayer, I expect that as well.

But I do believe that our current FOIA laws go far beyond reasonableness in disclosing a dangerous level of information about, not only the Governor, but other persons who may, elected officials who may be under protection by the State Police.

Never in my time of protecting people would we reveal precise organizational structure about the Principal Security Team, their names, their backgrounds, their addresses, phone numbers, or how many people were on an assignment.

I don't think regular Arkansans would want their personal security information about their own house, alarms and CCTV's, disclosed to the public.

But I think the Arkansas FOIA Law, today, does exactly that.

Sadly, we do live in a time that is divided, and there is violence in our society that comes in all forms.

Crime, civil unrest, political unrest and otherwise.

And those create threats to our Government Officials.

Last Fall, a man was arrested near Russellville after following the Governor around to multiple cities during campaign stops and threaten to shoot her.

The nature of stalking itself is to gather information to assess security for vulnerabilities, plan, and then make an attack.

So, exposing security measures of the Governor, and other constitutional officers in a Judicial Branch would expose them to higher threats.

And, as the Colonel said, would require additional expense in security measures to protect against those threats.

I do believe it's time to update these laws, not just for Governor Sanders, but the Governors that come into office after that for multiple years and also for the continuity of our government.

Thank you.

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