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Michael J. Skindell
State Representative

Before the House Rules and Reference Committee
Sponsor Testimony on House Resolution 352 – Requiring the Wearing of Masks
Representative Michael J. Skindell, 13th House District
Tuesday, May 20, 2020

Mr. Speaker, members of the House Rules and Reference Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Resolution 342.

Since late February 2020, more than 92,000 Americans and 1,650 Ohioans have lost their lives due to the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

House Resolution 342 requires for people to wear a facial covering to lessen the spread during House Session and committee meetings while the Governor's March 9, 2020, state of emergency is in place or until the new General Assembly is seated in 2021. The wearing of a mask to lessen the spread of the virus is recommended by the CDC and public health officials around the world.

The CDC recommendation on this topic states that a "significant portion" of persons with coronavirus lack symptoms and that they can transmit the virus to others. The CDC notes that "[t]his mean that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity – for example speaking, coughing, or sneezing – even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms." In addition to maintaining 6-foot social distancing, the CDC advises "the use of simple cloth face covering to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others"

Since the announcement of the CDC recommendation on face coverings, scientists around the globe have extensively examined the issue. In a paper published by De Kai, PhD., a researcher at University California, Berkeley, and University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong, *et al.*, on April 21, 2020, entitled in part "**Universal Masking is Urgent in the COVID-19 Pandemic**", observed: "Results show a near perfect correlation between early universal masking and successful suppression of daily case growth rates and/or reduction from peak daily case growth rates . . ." The researchers concluded: "We recommend immediate mask wearing recommendations."

On May 12, 2020, international researchers lead by Jeremy Howard, a research scientist at the University of San Francisco, published the second version of a paper entitled "**Face Masks Against COVID-19: An Evidence Review**" reaching a similar conclusion. In the paper, the researchers concluded: "The preponderance of the evidence indicates that mask wearing reduces the transmissibility per contact by reducing transmission of infected droplets in both laboratory and clinical contexts. Public mask wearing is most effective at reducing spread of the virus when compliance is high."

Here in the General Assembly, members convene from all parts of the state to conduct the business of the people. While conducting the people's business in full session or in committee, such activity is fertile ground for the spread of COVID-19. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure we do not spread the virus while conducting our business and carry it back home to our families and communities. We have more information, more science, than did the anti-maskers of 1918, whose actions contributed to the spreading of that influenza pandemic to thousands. By wearing a mask, you are demonstrating your deep concern for the health and safety of the people around you.