

Testimony of Nadera Lopez-Garrity
Proponent House Bill 624
State and Local Government Committee
June 2, 2020

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and honorable members of the State and Local Government Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of House Bill 624. My name is Nadera Lopez-Garrity and as a concerned citizen in Ohio with a journalistic background, I support accuracy in data and reporting, especially when it is utilized to impact policies that affect our health, livelihood and overall well-being, all of which are intrinsically connected to our God given rights to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

It was evident earlier on that the modeling used to justify the policies and actions taken by the Director of Health and Governor DeWine, which did take into consideration social distancing, isolation and quarantine measures, were drastically erroneous and woefully misguided. As a result, millions of Ohioans lives and the economy have been adversely impacted in some of the most tragic ways.

Over 1.11 million of Ohioans are currently unemployed as a result of the orders that were not only based on a woefully misguided model as previously mentioned but devoid valuable data. A recent meta-analysis of 42 scientific peer reviewed studies conducted in 15 countries on the relationship between unemployment and all-cause mortality found that unemployment increased the risk of dying by 63%. I am personally aware of several individuals who have tragically lost loved ones as a result of the current orders devastating impact on those lives.

I also visited a local physician last month who informed me that the number of suicide and depression cases among his patients have drastically increased due to unemployment as a result of the director's orders. Revealing that nurses were among the most vulnerable demographic he was seeing in his practice, losing ultimately three of his patients in just one month as a result of suicide from the devastation of unemployment, in addition to caring for several other attempted suicides cases among his patients struggling with the devastating impact of such orders. Additionally, critical care patients, including those with ruptured arteries and malignant carcinoma were being denied access to life-saving care. Meanwhile, a patient who had endured a tragic automobile accident was to be tested and counted as a COVID-19 death if results came back positive despite having no concerns of such symptoms.

Personal reports from frontline nurses caring for COVID-19 patients within local hospitals have also revealed instances whereby they are instructed to count negative COVID-19 test results as positive, even despite having two confirmatory tests in some instances that negates the presence of such virus in the patients tested.

Such revelations are not only appalling but should be shocking were it not for the email disseminated by the State Medical Board of Ohio instructing physicians to count "assumed"

cases as being COVID-19 despite having no reliable or credible confirmation of the sorts. The implications of such irresponsible measures of reporting lacking in science, credibility and scruples should disturb anyone with a pulse and asserts the importance of House Bill 624.

It is enough of the suicides and mental health implications that such orders lacking in reliable and accurate data have inflicted upon Ohioans. It is enough of the domestic violence and abuse Ohioans have been forced to endure away from the only places they felt safe. It is enough of empty food pantries and starvations as Ohioans face the gut-wrenching decisions of choosing between paying a mortgage or putting food on the table for themselves and their loved ones, as their bank accounts dwindle and the risk of ending up in the streets or forming part of another death of despair statistic becomes more eminent than the 99% survival rate of COVID-19. It is enough of forsaking beloved seniors in long term care facilities who test positive for COVID-19, yet are denied access to care within hospital systems, adding insult to them and all of Ohioans who have sacrificed and lost much, including lives, to ensure our medical systems are not overburdened despite having plenty of resources to treat all patients, even when most of their staff has been furloughed as a result of the orders that have proven to be reckless to the lives and livelihoods of millions in some of the most unimaginable ways. It is enough of ignoring the true health measures and therapeutics that could potentially help optimize Ohioans immune systems and quality of life, if we are to truly concern ourselves about health. It is enough of the economic suicide and destructive impact on small businesses, ALL of which ARE ESSENTIAL for the survival of those who depend on them for their God-given right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Decisions that impact the lives of millions of Ohioans merit better science and evidence than those that are based on assumptions and conveniently neglected facts. We need accurate, complete, transparent data and real time reporting for everyone's sake. Such legislation is not only reasonable but necessary to ensure Ohioans wellbeing.

I urge you to please vote YES on House Bill 624. I am happy to answer any questions to the best of my ability.

Thank you kindly for your time and consideration.

Resources

- “Will ‘Deaths of Despair’ Outpace Deaths From Coronavirus?” Children’s Health Defense. March 23, 2020. <https://childrenshealthdefense.org/news/will-deaths-of-despair-outpace-deaths-from-coronavirus/>
- Roelfs. David, Shor. Eran, Davidson. Karina, Schwartz. Joseph, “Losing life and livelihood: A systematic review and meta-analysis of unemployment and all-cause mortality.” Science Direct. Volume 72, Issue 6, March 2011, Pages 840-854 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S027795361100044X>
- “Guidance for Reporting COVID-19 on Certificate of Death.” State Medical Board of Ohio. [https://med.ohio.gov/Portals/0/Resources/COVID-19/3_31%20Guidance%20for%20Reporting%20COVID-19%20on%20Certificate%20of%20Death.pdf?ver=2020-03-30-210827-767&utm_source=BenchmarkEmail&utm_campaign=Updated Guidance %26 Alerts&utm_medium=email](https://med.ohio.gov/Portals/0/Resources/COVID-19/3_31%20Guidance%20for%20Reporting%20COVID-19%20on%20Certificate%20of%20Death.pdf?ver=2020-03-30-210827-767&utm_source=BenchmarkEmail&utm_campaign=Updated%20Guidance%20Alerts&utm_medium=email)