



# OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## *Office of Representative John Becker*

### **Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 618**

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Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairman Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and fellow members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 618, which is called the Need Ohio Working - (NOW) Act. The bill fully reopens society in Ohio without delay by restoring Ohioans' confidence in the rule of law. The NOW Act ensures that all orders of the Governor and Department of Health regarding contagious and infectious diseases are advisory.

As you know, Ohio has experienced an epic abuse of power by this administration and it's long past time to stop the madness.

With the approval of the governor, one person placed nearly 12 million innocent Ohioans under house arrest (with a list of exceptions) and without due process of law. Violation of the house arrest order carried a potential penalty of a second-degree misdemeanor with a maximum sentence of 90 days in jail and \$750. It has since been reduced to advisory.

However, draconian restrictions remain in place. For example, employees are required to wear masks. Many believe that requirement to be insulting, humiliating, and degrading. That, along with other restrictions and limitations, has made Ohio a hostile work environment.

HB 618 strips the administration of the power they've abused by modifying RC 3701.13 (among other provisions) to require approval by the General Assembly for past, current, and future orders. Currently, one person has exercised her power to shut down, not just Ohio's economy, but the fabric of society as well.

In the event that draconian action becomes necessary in the future and the General Assembly is unable to meet in a timely manner, HB 618 does not change the current authority of any local boards of health, except that they shall no longer have the authority to close polling locations tantamount to cancelling an election. They will continue to have the authority to take whatever action is required within their jurisdictions to flatten the curve without flattening the economy.

Had HB 618 been in effect at the beginning of this year, the following would have occurred:

- Department of Health Director, Amy Acton's and/or Governor DeWine's orders would only be advisory unless first approved by the General Assembly.
- The polling locations would not have been closed anywhere in the state.

- Local boards of health may have taken action within their jurisdictions to “flatten the curve” without flattening the economy and unraveling the fabric of Ohio.
- Rather than a wrecking ball applied to every square inch of Ohio, local jurisdictions would have taken a measured approach where needed.

Thank you Chairman Wiggam. This concludes my testimony for HB 618.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members for your consideration of the NOW Act, and I welcome any questions you may have.