



Ron Hood

State Representative

78th Ohio House District

Sponsor Testimony on HB 649

June 9, 2020

Mr. Chairman and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for bringing this important piece of legislation up for consideration.

As stated previously, HB 649 seeks to fix broken parts of the Ohio Revised Code that unconstitutionally confer ‘ultimate authority’ to a single executive officeholder over all matters of quarantine and isolation. This is an important concept that can’t be overstated, because we have all taken an oath to support both federal and state constitutions. Even though the unconstitutional shift of authority was granted many years ago, the experience with this year’s Chinese Virus was the first time citizens statewide experienced the unchecked power of executive branch.

HB 649 prohibits any entity other than the General Assembly from postponing any state or local election (similar to what was passed last week in HB 680), gives the Legislature the final say over future director orders regarding quarantine and isolation, protects Ohioans’ DNA from being shared with outside entities, and requires informed consent for testing for any disease or antibodies. But what is unique with HB649 compared to other bills seeking a balance in policy, is that this bill focuses on the statutory source of the overreach. We are expressly prohibited in Article II, sec. 26 of the Ohio Constitution from allowing any other authority to pass laws and these director orders, which carry criminal penalties, are de facto laws.

As a result of unchecked authority we have seen over the past several months an executive branch that has unilaterally halted almost all economic activity outside of a bureaucratically established definition of essential business operations, pushed a record numbers of citizens out of work, and destroyed the livelihoods of so many thriving small business owners across the state.

My constituents have made it clear that they prefer freedom and liberty to the overreach of unconstitutional orders. They want balance in the role of the Ohio Department of Health in responding to a health emergency.

We believe we can use what we have learned from the Chinese Virus to prepare for the future – and this bill does exactly that.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions that you have.