

RE: SB 311 – Proponent Testimony

**To Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairman Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the State and Local Government Committee:**

I am testifying in favor of SB 311 today as an Ohio resident gravely concerned about actions being taken under the current emergency powers, and the catastrophic effects it is having on all of us.

Representatives, I urge you to please stand up and protect Ohioans' personal liberties—and the future of our state—by voting YES on SB 311.

“Two weeks to flatten the curve and not overwhelm hospitals” has evolved into a tyrannical campaign to control every aspect of Ohioan's lives. Governor DeWine has taken everything from us with his lockdowns and mandates. Our small and local businesses are crushed, many shuttered forever. Those that managed to survive round one of the lockdown will simply not survive another. Jobs lost, livelihoods destroyed, friendships and family relationships frayed and divided over COVID points of view. Ohioans blocked from seeing their elderly family in care settings, or even from experiencing the birth of their child. Depression, anxiety, and suicide running rampant, as is hopelessness. Our children are scared and confused, being deprived of childhood experiences and being taught to fear the world around them.

The data simply does not support that any of these methods are, first of all, necessary. We have 11.7 million Ohioans, of which about 2.6% have at one point in 2020 tested positive for COVID. We can call it three if you like. Not 20, not 50, not 75%. Three percent after millions upon millions of PCR tests. Three percent that includes numbers from nursing homes and prisons, which are not reflective of the general population. Three percent, which has in turn affected 100% of Ohioans catastrophically.

We have almost a year's worth of data to prove that COVID is no more dangerous than an average flu. The data we *do* have is skewed heavily to support this narrative; PCR testing is unreliable and can literally be dialed up or down to utilize enough cycles to generate a positive out of anything. A “positive” doesn't mean *live* COVID virus or an infectious person, or even COVID at all—it can be picking up cold or flu viruses, even other coronaviruses. Worse yet, the line between “died from COVID” and “happened to die *with* COVID” has been blurred and distorted to make counts look higher. Ohioans, and all Americans, are being misled.

Governor DeWine has thus far taken advantage of all of this, using it against us. We've never undertaken any of these Draconian measures for flu, so why COVID? Why have we literally put our lives on hold for this? Look around at what we're doing. We're terrified of other humans, losing our humanity bit by bit. We're putting our Ohio State students through hell enforcing randomized mandatory testing. We now have to wear masks walking alone in the Columbus Metroparks—we no longer even have the sanctity of nature's respite from this madness. Every day it's something worse, led by DeWine.

It feels like one long Twilight Zone episode, all under DeWine's leadership and fearmongering. Torturing Ohioans with the constant threat of another shutdown so that we literally are incapable of planning the teeny-tiny bit of our lives we have left. Scolding us for being bad children when, in effect, I never see anyone at a store not masking. Ohioans have cooperated and their lives have bled for this. When does it end, I ask you? Who will stop it? If left unchecked, DeWine will have us masking for the rest of our lives, after he first forces a highly-questionable vaccine on us. He needs to be limited.

I've heard that the newest edict, the 10 p.m. curfew, was bullied into acceptance by threatening the other alternative, a total shutdown. This is like bargaining for someone to only chop off your arm, rather than killing you outright, and being expected to be happy and thankful for their "kindness".

Personally, I've been a wreck since this all began in February. I'm constantly stressed and anxious about DeWine's next move, struggling deeply with depression brought on by this mess and by seeing everything I had fall away from me. My own parents are afraid of me. (Where do they get it from? They watch local news multiple times a day, which does nothing but prop up DeWine's views.) I've lost the few solid adult friendships I had. I can't stand to see my family fallen victim to this narrative. I lost my job amid this mess, among millions of others, and face unbelievable competition for another. Even if I do, I can only imagine it'll be stuck at home on my PC, still isolated miserably from humans.

I'm begging with everything I have left in me, please, do anything and everything in your power to put checks and balances onto DeWine's power. This state and its people cannot survive like this much longer. Decision-making power must be shared, not solely wielded by DeWine like a child running amok with a lawnmower over our lives.

Ohioans are suffering under the worst, most contagious sickness of all—fear. We need leadership, not fearmongering and punishment. We need transparency of data, and decisions governed by that data and real trends. We need to fully reopen Ohio, not shut it down again.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your time and consideration. Please vote YES on SB 311.

Brittany Stueber

Columbus, OH