

**Testimony of Michelle Cotterman, RN**  
**President, Health Freedom Ohio**  
**Support Senate Bill 311**  
**Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee**  
*June 24, 2020*

Dear Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and honorable members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee:

I ask that you support the provisions in Senate Bill 311 that would put some reasonable limitations on emergency powers during pandemics such as the one we're experiencing now. I know many people and businesses suffering more from the lockdown and related measures than I do from the infection. Some will never recover to what they were before the measures — if they recover at all.

Ohioans were told that we needed to shelter in place, limiting trips to necessities only, and most of us agreed to that for the initial two weeks. This was to flatten the curve, or ensure that hospitals could handle the anticipated rush of COVID-19 cases. As a biomedical engineer, I understood that the area under the graph did not change, so infections and deaths would be spread out rather than necessarily prevented. We watched as every data point proved exaggerated. We were promised an explanation of the model but never given it.

Just in these few months, I have advocated for a grandmother left to die without seeing her family because of the “threat” of the virus, as well as a child with serious cancer-related concerns prevented from having both parents present. I have watched my friends and family become increasingly alarmed and even sinking into depression as the measures had no end in sight. And then, when the end was supposed to be near, people were told to expect a “new normal”.

Nobody in charge seemed to care about what the actual data were, how severely the virus was impacting people in terms of health, how many had serious versus mild versus no symptoms, and what was the social and economic toll of the measures. It became clear that the end goal was an all-out “war” on an invisible enemy. A war that utilized the most strict measures of prolonged isolation, social distancing, wearing masks, and extensive use of chemical-based sanitizing agents -- each of which has a significant toll on physical and mental health.

I did not agree to an all-out war on any pathogen. Our efforts toward that have resulted in many past failures and unanticipated consequences. It is beyond time to demand that the actual data be presented to Ohioans so that they can make informed decisions about their own health and so that public health officials can be viewed as being truthful, transparent, and responsive to real-time conditions, not just overblown models that never accounted for changing circumstances. I respectfully request that you vote YES for SB 311 so that some level of accountability and accuracy can be returned to the public health response to this virus.

Sincerely,

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