

Testimony of Nichole Short RN, BSN, IBCLC
Support HB90
State and Local Government Committee
February 17, 2021

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

At the onset, I would like to thank you for listening to my testimony in support of HB90. My name is Nichole Short. I am an RN, IBCLC and mother of three children. I believe the best way to express my deep support for HB 90 is to go into great detail about how the Governor's orders have negatively impacted myself and my family.

Most recently, on February 11, 2021 I took my 8 year old daughter and my 5 year old son to a sports facility that we have been attending all basketball season. This particular day we were attending my daughter's last travel basketball tournament of the season. We presented the doorman with our COVID health assessment forms and my children's medical exemptions from face coverings, which we have been utilizing all season. The doorman stated "You're going to be upset but we can no longer accept these". I was told by the staff that my children would have to put a mask on or leave the facility despite being evaluated by their pediatrician and having that medical professional determine that it would be detrimental for my children, given their medical history and current health, to don a mask. I asked him if he thought denying entrance to a facility based on someone's medical condition and their inability to wear a mask was right. His response was, "Listen, I'm just doing my job". I would hope that we could all agree that the "I'm just doing my job" hasn't been a valid excuse dating back to the Nuremberg trials.

I had a very difficult decision to make. I would either mask my young child against their physician's recommendation or we would leave and my daughter would have to miss her last tournament and break her commitment to her team. Some may see that basketball game as not such a big deal but I can tell you from personal experience, these things that seem so miniscule to adults are the world to our children. That personal experience comes from having my 12 year old niece attempt to take her own life in November of 2020. She overdosed on Nortriptyline, went into cardiac arrest, suffered numerous seizures and had to be intubated and remained intubated for over a week. Fortunately, she survived but how many other families have not been as fortunate as us. Our children are suffering from this overreach of government. I made the decision to place a mask on my child and let her participate in her last tournament. I had to leave my minor child in the care of her coach as my youngest son and I had to leave the building and wait in the car. I cried when I got to the car.

There are sport's facilities and organizations all over Ohio, including my oldest son's travel baseball league and my daughter's, that are requiring children to wear a mask in the facility the entire time. Including, when they are physically active. Children are being required to wear masks in gym class and at recess. The lungs are an excretory organ and adjust to pH. Carbon dioxide is a metabolic WASTE, when you rebreathe it, you retain acid, which can be taxing on the kidneys. In addition, retaining CO2 will subsequently increase arterial blood flow in the brain, because the brain is oxygen hungry and needs to compensate. Children and adults should not be wearing masks when they are physically active but due to

the Governor's orders and repeated threats of closures these small businesses feel the need to take every measure possible to keep their doors open.

Bystander at the Switch: The Moral Case Against COVID Lockdowns written by Julius Ruechel brings to light the immorality of lockdowns and the restrictions or orders placed on citizens. I ask you all to please take the time to read this article in its entirety at your leisure but I will just share a small excerpt as it is so akin to the current events.

“Do you remember the moral riddle taught in grade school called the "Bystander at the Switch" (also known as the Trolley Problem)? It was a story about a runaway train hurtling towards a cluster of people stuck on the tracks ahead. But you have the option to pull the switch and send the train down another track with a smaller number of people on it. You have the option of saving some lives by sacrificing a smaller number of others. Do you pull the switch?

In grade school the riddle was posed as a moral dilemma. But it's not. There was only ever one correct choice. We invented universal human rights to make it clear that no person or government has the right to pull the switch to send the train down another track towards a sacrificial group of victims.

In December of 1948, in the aftermath of the human rights violations committed during the Second World War, the member states of the United Nations formally adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It explicitly forbids the government from treating some people as worth less than others. It forbids the government from sacrificing some people for the benefit of others. It forbids the government from knowingly imposing harm on some individuals in order to serve an alleged greater good. And it forbids the government from imposing a hierarchy of rights on their citizens.

Lockdowns during COVID pose the exact same question as the Bystander at the Switch. But it's not a game; once again there are real lives at stake. Yet in direct violation of the principles of universal human rights, governments around the world are choosing to pull the switch by imposing lockdowns "for our safety." In doing so they have given themselves the authority to play God with our lives.

Are you essential or non-essential? Each category now has different rights and freedoms and different levels of individual autonomy. Some have the right to earn a living. Others do not. Some have the right to choose how to balance the risks and priorities in their lives. Others do not. How can any job that feeds a family not be essential?

What about the collateral damage caused by lockdowns? Mandatory lockdowns are leading to the deaths of countless individuals through cancelled/delayed medical operations, suicides, drug overdoses, loneliness and isolation in nursing homes, and more. None of these deaths would happen without lockdowns. Government is throwing one group of people onto the tracks with the goal of saving another.”

Without a doubt there are countless lives that have been lost due to the government's COVID response in initiating lockdowns and restricting human rights. We will never be able to tally the amount of lives lost as we do with COVID but I can tell there are families all over Ohio and the country that will attest to this.

I implore you to please vote in support of HB90 and put an end to this over reach and restore our checks and balances by giving the legislature the ability to rescind these orders.