

To: House State and Local Government Committee

From: Janet Levatin, MD
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Re: proponent testimony on HB90, a bill to establish oversight over the Governor's executive orders, certain public health orders, and emergency rules.

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and Committee Members, thank you for this opportunity to testify today in favor of HB 90.

My name is Dr. Janet Levatin. I have been a pediatrician since 1982, and have lived and worked here in Ohio since 2011. I am testifying today as both a citizen and a physician caring for patients on a daily basis. HB90 is a bill I am happy to support, along with my support for companion bill SB22.

When living in a state, in a country that is supposed to be free, is it right that we all have to follow unilateral directives put forth by one man, or one department, or one agency for months? For the past 11 months we have been living under the directives of unchecked authority figures and departments, and the consequences on our health and economy have not been good.

At one point last summer, the Ohio Board of Pharmacy banned the use of hydroxychloroquine for treatment of COVID-19,ⁱ a decision that was later reversed, at the urging of our governor.ⁱⁱ *This* is an example of exactly the type of checks and balances we need in government, and we need more of this.

We need to question whether the governor and the ODH have, in the main, been basing their decisions on sound science, or biased, corrupted "science." There are well recognized controversies about much of the so-called science that has driven the guidelines during the current pandemic.

There is controversy about whether masks stop the spread of viral illnesses. As far as I know, there is no valid science that supports this claim,ⁱⁱⁱ yet we have all been told we need to wear masks when out in public. This issue alone is causing major fractures in families and friendships, in business and personal relationships. In fact, however, there is a higher per capita incidence of COVID cases in states with mask mandates (27 per 100,000 vs. 17 per 100,000).^{iv} This is one issue that needs review by a committee that can fully assess the facts and take appropriate actions.

There is also controversy over the use of PCR (polymerase chain reaction) testing and the cycle counts used for diagnosing COVID-19. Yet numbers of cases, determined in this way, have driven ongoing lockdowns and curfews of businesses and schools.

Addiction, suicide, abuse, non-pandemic disease, and deaths of despair are on the rise. Treatment options for these problems were limited or even unavailable for months. Still, many medical appointments are conducted by phone or internet. We need to question if the solutions we have been given are worse than the problems they are supposed to be solving.

If HB90 passes into law, the legislature will become involved in overseeing the governor's and ODH's directives. If we get our Health Oversight and Advisory Committee, hopefully we will see more balance and equity in how decisions are made and implemented. I would like to see normal citizens and health care professionals with varying opinions included on this committee, or at least serving in an advisory capacity to the committee. Too much is at stake to allow such a small number of individuals to determine how we are directed to live our lives.

Hopefully this committee will submit HB90 to the House for a vote, and the House will do the right thing and pass it into law.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Levatin, MD

ⁱ <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/ohio-pharmacy-board-bans-hydroxychloroquine-as-coronavirus-treatment/ar-BB17199I>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2020/07/30/ohio-pharmacy-board-reverses-hydroxychloroquine-ban-mike-dewine-request/5547751002/>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.citizensforfreespeech.org/why_masks_don_t_work_against_covid_19

^{iv} <https://medicalkidnap.com/2020/12/23/study-mask-mandates-increase-rates-of-covid-compared-to-states-with-no-mask-mandates/>