

Testimony of Shannon Kazee
Proponent, House Bill 90
House State and Local Government Committee
February 16, 2021

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

Thank you for hearing my testimony on House Bill 90. My name is Shannon Kazee, and I'm a 17-year-old homeschooled student in my senior year. I am a competitive ballroom dancer, rock singer, and specialty baker.

NO PROMS, NO SPORTS, NO GRADUATIONS, NO JOBS, NO PLAYDATES, NO HOLIDAYS. NO QUESTIONS, NO CONCERNS, NO REAL HELP. STAY HOME. STAY SAFE. FLATTEN THE CURVE. WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER.

This is what people my age faced this past year. We are the least affected by this virus. Much research says we don't really pass it to others as much as feared. But in many ways, we are the most targeted and impacted by the response.

I come from a diverse family with many medical issues -- including my brother with extreme short gut and autism and myself who overcame epilepsy. We stay positive and proactive and don't dwell on things we cannot change. We do not let fear rule us. We work to keep ourselves healthy from the food we eat to the exercise we get to the products we use. Our mantra is: Be radically kind, inclusive, and free.

This year was unlike any other. I watched as many friends expressed extreme unhappiness and hopelessness but believed they had no options. Every week the guidance about what we should be doing

seemed to change. If you pushed back, you were trying to kill grandma, didn't care, were going to get COVID and die.

I watched as people around me posted masked selfies on social media, only to remove the masks immediately afterwards. A friend took off his mask on a hot day, wiped his sweaty face with it, and then put it back on. Other friends justified getting together in person by claiming to be parts of family pods, even though many people in those same pods worked and did business outside their homes. No concern was given for the actual science about mask use or any of the other measures, only that you covered your face in public and did whatever you were told to stay safe.

Bullying has been sanctioned and codified; a new class system and segregation have been ushered in. Young people repeated the Orwellian catchphrases released by authorities without questioning and while shouting down any opposition. And the mean girls now have a socially elevated platform. 2020 was the year to affirm and denounce various issues, even if you were a pretty terrible person in real life. All that mattered was you did and said what you were told.

Pardon me for trying to stay active, for doing what I can to hold on to the last bits of normal life that exist, for refusing to inhale my own CO2 and mask bacteria buildup, for wanting and needing to breathe freely. Pardon me for being raised to question and draw my own conclusions. Pardon me for thinking that health means a little bit more than staying home, staying worried, and wearing masks. Pardon me for being concerned about all of the disposable products being used or the new sanitizers that burn my eyes and hands and make it difficult to breathe. How safe are those? What are the long-term effects?

I respectfully ask that you vote YES on HB 90 so that more voices are brought to the table in times of outbreaks and so that no political or social agendas can take precedence over personal freedoms, civil rights, and a balanced and inclusive scientific view of health.