

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairman John, Ranking Member Kelly , and members of the State and Local Government Reform Committee,

I would like to add my voice to those in favor of HB 90. I am an Ohio resident deeply concerned about the totalitarian actions taken by our Governor over the past year. Any emergency act providing our governor with totalitarian powers is wrong and goes against the basic fundamental concepts of this country.

When Covid arrived, *TEMPORARY* emergency orders to limit the impact on hospitals were issued. This was fine because there was not much known about the disease and the media was rampant with “chicken little” death toll forecasts. HB90 allows for short term expiring states of emergency and I think this part of HB90 would still support initial emergency actions, if needed, during the beginning of an unknown pandemic.

However, as time passed and we learned more about the disease, the Governors orders became more ridiculous and less fact/medically based. For example, you can play tennis but you can't touch the ball. You can play golf but you can't touch the ball or let it fall in the cup. You can eat outside at a restaurant, but not inside, apparently because Covid only lives indoors. You can eat outside at a restaurant starting this Saturday, but you can't eat inside until the following Saturday. And despite lack of evidence pointing to bars/restaurants being Covid epicenters, the Governor imposed additional closures and curfews. And to enforce his mandates, he tried to empower “Covid Police”.

To justify these random orders, statistics were developed and presented to us on a daily basis, primarily to create fear within the population. These numbers were manipulated to present the worst possible light. For example, percentage of ICU beds filled wasn't beds filled with Covid patients, it was beds filled for any reason such as post-surgical care, car crashes, heart attacks, and so on. If you dug into it, you could find that out, but that's not what was represented. In addition, daily statistics continued to present only running tallies since Covid day 1. Almost daily we heard the Governor tell us there are now 300, 400, 500 thousand cases of Covid in Ohio. It was convenient how they decided to NOT report *ACTIVE* cases (meaning only people currently infected) or something as basic as the percentage of all Ohioan's currently infected (active cases/Ohio population). Again, the reported numbers and the omitted data were designed to keep Ohioan's afraid and to justify the Governors actions to keep the state of emergency going. HB90 would have helped make this reporting more transparent in many ways, if not simply by having more legislature voices identifying what should be reported.

The Governor had several options in addressing Covid. He could have done nothing (as with the yearly flu) or he could have just issued safety guidelines (6ft, masks, etc.). Instead, he chose the

absolutely most destructive approach and he decided to shut down Ohio. Not for just the initial weeks, but long term. It wasn't Covid that wrecked Ohio's economy and destroyed the lives of millions of our residents, it was our Governor's choice to shut down our economy that caused this devastation. This bears repeating. In the face of Covid, our Governor chose the most destructive option in an attempt to lessen the impacts of Covid. And he chose this option despite warnings and without any apparent concern for the long term impacts it could have. It wasn't Covid that ruined the lives of millions of Ohioans, but our Governor's selected path to address Covid. And in hind sight, we all now know the resulting impacts on increased drug overdoses, increased suicides, thousands and thousands of closed businesses that won't ever return, family savings wiped out, and so on. Having something like HB90 in place would have given our legislators the opportunity to review the Governor's edicts and hopefully given them the opportunity to greatly reduce the long term on-going impacts caused by the dictatorial edicts.

There needs to be a balance in these types of situations. HB90 seeks to provide that balance and as such I strongly urge all our legislators to vote yes on HB90.

Thank you
Daryl Deffler
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