

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly and the Honored Members of the State & Local Government Committee, my name is Dave Bartiromo and I appreciate the opportunity to provide emailed testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 90.

I am the father of two children. My daughter is currently an 8th grader and my son is a high school senior. Over the course of the last year, as a result of Governor DeWine's draconian and tyrannical restrictions, my children are being forced to live a life that sometimes feels very dystopian. Mike DeWine likes to claim "the experts have spoken" and "the jury is in" when it comes to mask wearing. However, he has never once provided any evidence showing that masks are slowing or stopping the spread. In fact, once he (and other governors) instituted their mask mandates cases skyrocketed. In fact, when the mandate started, cases in Ohio were on their way down, only to be reversed by the 90%+ compliance to the mask mandate. My children, and children all over the state, are forced to wear masks for 7+ hours a day in school. It's incontrovertible that these masks limit oxygen intake, cause mask mouth, acne, anxiety and depression. Further, we do not know the long term effects that extensive masking will have on these kids in the future. While Governor DeWine claims that the "experts have spoken," I ask - which experts? The ones who have lied to us for almost a year now? The experts who said masks are better than vaccines? The ones who said wear a mask, don't wear a mask, wear a mask and now, wear two masks? (And if you needed further proof that masks don't work, consider this: if one mask EVER worked, why might we need to wear two?) The fact is, I have compiled nearly two dozen studies, abstracts and articles that show how masks are not helping (and may be hindering), asymptomatic spread is virtually non-existent and how the physiological and sociological effects of masks are causing potential harm to our kids and the rest of our society as well. (I am happy to provide links if requested.) I communicate on a near weekly basis with our superintendent and while he's sympathetic, he toes the line - not wanting to be the first one to make a change or push back because he sees mask wearing as the only way to keep kids in the classroom. These theatrics, these optics have to stop.

High school seniors enjoy many rites of passage as their high school experience comes to a close. However, thanks to Governor DeWine, my son (and seniors all across Ohio) has lost nearly every one of these. He lost: Academic Recognition Night, Career Day, Senior Leaf Raking Day (community service event), college signing day and more. Unless things change, he'll likely lose senior prom and traditional graduation as well. He can never get these things back. And when kids are at statistically no risk from this virus, why are we preventing them from having these experiences?

We're going to look back and realize the serious mistakes our elected leaders made when it comes to this virus.

Due to the restrictions put in place by DeWine, our family and many others have little to look forward to. By now we're usually made plans to attend sporting events, take small regional vacations and participate in extended family activities. None of that is possible now. Vacations with masks on are not vacations. Family gatherings are limited to 10 and even then they're discouraged. Sporting events are going to look different because of all the COVID regulations. There is nothing on the calendar. There is nothing to look forward to. It's Groundhog Day every day. I am a runner. In 2019 I ran 16 races and trained hard for every one of them. In the past year, thanks to Mike DeWine I was lucky enough to run ONE. Depression can set in very easily and the longer these restrictions on gatherings, events, etc. are in place, the more people that will be affected.

Governor DeWine's mask mandate, if I may revisit that once again, is forcing non-medical people to make medical decisions. Two examples: my son was on the high school bowling team. OHSAA mandated that he wear a mask when he bowls. Why? Because, and I quote from their guidelines: "wear masks, even when bowling as the ball often comes into contact with the mouth and the chin." Now, I don't know about you but when I bowl I never kiss or lick the bowling ball. These rules are ridiculous. Second example: the Cleveland and Akron area YMCAs, afraid that DeWine was set to shut them down again, mandated that people wear masks **EVEN WHEN EXERCISING**. So, all runners, bikers, etc. had to mask up while exercising. This is dangerous, unsafe and against WHO recommendations yet they did it anyway, only recently backing off on that policy, which was in place for at least two months. Businesses are so afraid of being shut down that they'll kowtow to the governor even when what they're doing makes no logical sense.

Lastly, I would like to address the campaign on which the governor will spend \$50 million dollars to get people to move to Ohio. Why would anyone want to move here now? So they can be burdened by curfews? So they can have their small business shut down? So they can be forced to wear masks all day? So that they can live in a state where one man has iron fist rule over all its citizens? Why move here when they can move to Florida or South Dakota or Texas or some other state where they don't have to live in fear? Here's how the governor can get people to move here: lift the curfew permanently, eliminate mask mandates, end gathering limits and free our kids from ridiculous school COVID rules. Let's get back to **NORMAL NOW**. Then he can save **OUR** \$50 million in tax dollars.

As I type this testimony I am watching the governor's press conference. He claims that Senate Bill 22 (and by extension, this bill) is unconstitutional. It's unconscionable that he calls these bills unconstitutional when he's been acting unconstitutionally for many, many months. He has indicated no exit strategy. He's provided no hope for Ohioans as to when restrictions and masks (especially on kids in schools, which I believe is child abuse), will end. It is my belief and the belief of many that I've spoken to that he will never lift the mask mandate. These restrictions were implemented to prevent the hospitals from getting overrun. They're not overrun, they never were overrun. It's time to remove the mandates NOW.

This egregious overreach is not about science or facts or truth. It's about POWER. It all comes down to that. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. That's where we are. And it needs to end NOW. Governor DeWine has managed to make people in Ohio so afraid that they're going to die that people are willing to stop living. They're willing to give up all their rights, freedoms and liberties because they've become scared. Benjamin Franklin said "Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety" This is where we are now. And as such, I enthusiastically support HB90 and I request that you ALL vote in favor of this bill. Remember, this is not about a party; this is about allowing one man to rule the state unchecked. This should be as non-partisan as it gets. And, I also implore you to add an emergency clause so that this bill can go into effect promptly upon passage. Ohioans cannot wait any longer to get their freedoms and their lives back.

Respectfully,

David Bartiromo  
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