

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit proponent testimony for House Bill 90. I support this legislation because it is almost the one year anniversary of “two weeks to flatten the curve.” On March 15, 2020 Dr. Amy Acton said “it is getting increasingly hard to give you numbers that are accurate.” It is now February of 2021, and we just realized that ODH still has no idea how to obtain accurate numbers, evidenced by their “missing” 4,000 deaths. Wouldn’t an oversight committee be helpful?

On that date she said “Some of our kids will get sick and some of our kids will die. They most certainly are infected as much as we are. If you are in a car accident and need your hospital, if you have a stroke or an MI, even if you never get coronavirus, people in this country can die of something other than coronavirus.”

Well, I have to hand it to Dr. Acton, she was absolutely correct. In Ohio, according to the Scientific Committee on Opioid Prevention and Education, the overdose deaths are the highest they’ve been in a decade. AG Yost said “Opioid overdose deaths in Ohio are worse than ever. The spike started in April 2020—right after the COVID lockdown began.”¹ Many people in this country have died of something other than coronavirus. Elderly people have been given a prison sentence of solitary confinement. What was their crime? Living in a long-term care facility. Almost all of whom didn’t ask to be there, but their family thought they would receive the best care by living there. Turns out, Gov. DeWine and Dr. Acton ignored for months that the overwhelming majority of deaths (upwards of 70%) early in the pandemic were taking place in Long Term Care and congregate facilities.² Were they concerned with getting testing in LTC facilities and stopping the community spread from employees and vendors? Nope. Where did their passions lie instead? Closing small businesses, not allowing children to go to school and closing daycare centers. Punishing those least at risk.

Again who were those least at risk for coronavirus, but possibly most at risk for dying of something other than coronavirus? Our children and young adults. Did you know, one in four young adults have seriously considered suicide since the lockdowns have began?³ And those self-determined “experts” in power cannot feign ignorance on the issue. They’ve created the “International COVID-19 Suicide Prevention Research Collaboration.”⁴ Why are we creating groups to study suicide prevention due to pandemic lockdowns, when the clear solution would be to open businesses and let people live their lives? We should absolutely help protect the elderly and most vulnerable, but why are we continuing to punish those that are at the lowest risk from the virus?

With the oversight in place with HB90, after 11 days when we had the data to show the deaths were in LTC facilities, Dr. Acton and Gov DeWine would have been called into the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee. They would have been required to show the data that they used to close schools and small businesses. They would have been required to answer for the overwhelming amount of deaths in LTC Facilities. They would have been required to tell the

OHOAC why they refused to supply testing for those in LTC Facilities until late May 2020. How many families would have been able to have Christmas with their loved ones if not for ODH's carelessness and sweeping orders?

With the oversight in place with HB90, Gov DeWine, Former Director Himes and Director McCloud would be forced to answer why they required small businesses, especially restaurants and bars, to invest in new technology and cleaning requirements, only to close down their establishments during their busiest time of the workday. Why is it that others states have given their small businesses autonomy within the cleaning protocols and they seem to be doing better than us with their cases and hospitalizations?

In closing, eleven months into any situation is no longer an emergency. We have changed the meaning of "emergency" to mean "keep saying this is so that everyone is scared and we can bilk more tax money from the Federal Government." Thirty days is plenty of time to assess whether a true emergency exists or if the need for overreaction has passed. I urge the committee to vote favorably on HB90 so that Ohioans may have a voice in the unlawful orders that have hurt so many.

Thank you,

Lindsey Evans

Sources:

¹<https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/January-2021/Record-Surges-in-Opioid-Overdoses-Prompts-AG-Yost>

²<https://www.cleveland.com/open/2020/05/ohio-will-test-all-nursing-home-staffers-and-some-residents-for-coronavirus-gov-mike-dewine-says.html>

³<https://www.npr.org/2020/09/10/911117577/the-pandemic-has-researchers-worried-about-teen-suicide>

⁴https://www.iasp.info/COVID-19_suicide_research.php