

Chairman Roegner, Vice Chari McColley, Ranking member Craig, and members of the State and Local Government Committee:

I am testifying today in favor of SB22.

In 2020, something occurred in the state of Ohio that, to my knowledge, is unprecedented. The governor of our state unilaterally restricted civil and human rights of our citizens. The first attempt that I know of was trying to adjust the primary voting. When a judge said he couldn't do that, he had the health department make his change. It's obvious to most of us, that him directing the Health Department to do something has no practical difference than him doing it directly.

Then, throughout the year, he has colluded with the health department to close businesses, locking down an entire civilian population, failing to share data underlying his decision, failed to apply consistent clearly understood metrics for his actions, enforced masking, caused fear and panic by near daily briefings, and refused to allow any oversight of his actions.

Our government is designed to operate under 3 co-equal branches of government. By opposing any oversight of his actions by the legislative branch, including vetoing SB311 last year, he has violated this agreement.

While SB22 does not go far enough, it should state that any mandates are ended unless the legislature APPROVES them continuing rather than the current wording that the emergency measures continue unless the legislature rescinds them, this is a good first step.

While this does not complete what is needed to restore balance to Ohio's government and restore a voice to the people, those from who all government authority derives, it is a necessary first step.

I urge passage of SB22.

Michael Barnes