

Chairman Wiggam and fellow Members of the Ohio House of Representatives Committee that you chair:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Arthur Lavin MD. I am a pediatrician who owns his own 2 doctor practice in the Cleveland, Ohio region. I also am the co-chair of a group of over 475 physicians, all also in the Cleveland area called Doctors Organized for Health Care Solutions (DOHCS).

I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 311.

Every day, we are flooded with calls from parents facing the dangers of COVID-19. Just today our practice saw a line of 20 cars come to our office for COVID testing. These are parents whose children I have cared for since they were born, we know them well and they know us. We are heavily exposed to this deadly virus, we are exposed to the stories of how this virus has killed members of their families quickly and agonizingly, we are exposed to stories of lives now permanently ruined as the virus has left family members unable to walk, to breathe, to think. In short, we see this is a deadly virus. It doesn't matter what someone says or posts or broadcasts, this virus is for real, its calamities are real, I have seen them.

So it was with a great deal of shock that I was informed that my Ohio General Assembly decided to take time off from the urgent need to save all Ohioans from the death and devastation this disease causes every day, to devote themselves to the political game of playing with the power of those in the best position to save your and my lives- the public health directors and governor of the State of Ohio. Did you know that in March and April and May, Ohio suffered far less than almost any other state the virus had appeared? Did you every wonder why that was? It was because someone who knew something about how viruses kill and maim took steps to stand up and stop the virus. That was not just anyone, it was the Governor and the Director of Health.

Now we must take valuable time away from fighting this virus to fight about whether the Governor and Director of Health will be allowed to continue fighting this virus. If I were a general and not a doctor, and this was a war against enemy soldiers not an enemy virus, it would be like finding out the General Assembly decided to stop fighting the war and argue about whether we should fight the war? Does that sound like a recipe for success?

I know it is not, because when the State abandoned its strategy of stopping the virus, the virus spread, and now we face a true catastrophe in Ohio. I am delivering the most urgent plea from hundreds of doctors. Do not surrender against this enemy, especially only months away of final victory with the vaccine. Now is not the time to strip those in a position to save my life, your life, and the lives of our over 1 million patients from being able to do so!

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote No on SB 311. It is dangerous, it the opinion of these hundreds of doctors, a yes vote will be the cause of many deaths.. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.