

June 3, 2021

HB 248 Vaccine Choice and Anti-Discrimination Act

I would like to take an opportunity to share what this last 15 months has been like for the average Ohioan. As a mental health provider and one who is heavily involved with the social services in Northeast Ohio, I am well aware of the mental health issues that we are facing due to this episode of the last 15 months:

- I have experienced loss of clients through overdoses because they could not get into treatment due to the shutdown
- Depression, anxiety, and the fear caused from this shut down has many isolated and it has caused tremendous turmoil in their lives.
- Persons not leaving their home for any reason due to the unfounded fear that was caused by this event.
- Loss of small business' has hit Ohio hard and now we have 10's of 1000's sitting at home dependent on the government and not enough employees for even big chains
- Family division and loss of friendships: this may not seem like a deficit but look back at history with the civil war, brother against brother, we are there again! Families have been torn apart; friendships have been lost.
- The elder abuse of not allowing people to see their loved ones in their last years
- Mask abuse of adults but especially the child abuse that has come from that: kids not being able to breath freely, kids being judged and bullied by staff and teachers.
- My children did not get to return to a normal school year because I did not want them bullied for not wearing a mask, bullied by staff and teachers, let alone kids
- PTSD is real and we are now going to see many struggling with this issue due to the last 15 months
- Weddings, funerals, graduations, celebrations were all cancelled (unless you were the elite)
- Families went over a year without hugging one another and seeing one another

I realize some of you may not see an issue with some of the above issues that came out of the tyranny that America/Ohio allowed. But please realize it has destroyed people to their core and we will never be the same. Now people like me need to come along side the hurting and lost to help them heal. Some may never recover, some may end up socially, spiritually, mentally, and physically disjointed from life due to the last year. We must never allow such abuse to ensue again. By the way my list above is not exhaustive, it is just the start.

We must look at the facts and not the emotion of what this season of tyranny has done. More and more truth is coming out (refer to the Fauci emails) and there will be more. If we in Ohio do not have our medical freedoms, we have lost the whole essence of what America was built on. I am implore you to do the right thing and pass HB 248 Vaccine Choice and Anti-Discrimination Act and allow the citizens of Ohio and of America to have our rights that our men and women have lost their lives for us to have.

Sincerely,

Audra Popik. LPCC, LICDC, LSW

