

SB22 PROPONENT TESTIMONY

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee: Thank you for allowing me sponsor testimony for SB 22.

My name is Damon Appel, a lifelong resident of the State of Ohio, employed in the information technology sector for the last 23 years. Since November of 2020, I've been the Admin leading a 6500+ member Facebook group named "Ohioans Removing DeWine's Emergency Rules" (ORDER, for short). I speak for those who could not be here, and I speak for myself, in stating that Governor Mike DeWine's brazen and ongoing criminal overreach of power MUST END. This includes his liquor control board, with which he played puppeteer in August, directing them to institute a 120-day 10p curfew on businesses. This includes his willing Appointed accomplices in trampling on Constitutionally-guaranteed civil rights: the Ohio Health Directors, the most recent doing his bidding in November to extend that curfew through the holidays, when the liquor board's rule expired. The assignment of Stephanie McCloud as Health Director even violates the intent of ORC 121.10, as she is not a degreed doctor, and her 'public health experience' is certainly dubious in the context of a supposed state of viral emergency.

Governor DeWine's orders have turned my beloved State of Ohio into a literal Twilight Zone of incomprehensible and unscientific orders and regulations which serve to day-by-day, month-by-month erode the ability of businesses to survive. He has also been the poster child for the devastating 'COVID response' in America, infecting the rest of what should be a FREE COUNTRY with disingenuous press conferences and claims of 'concern' for the citizenry. We were one of the first 'lockdowns'. Our 2020 Primary election was the first to be unlawfully CANCELLED and tentatively rescheduled by a Governor.

I have personally seen the effect of this absolute insanity, on my own life and those around me. The Primary candidate I supported in Geauga County for the original March 17th election didn't win, but came close. I wonder how that might have been, if human beings had been able to stand at the polls?

My marriage which was already faltering was served a death-blow by the madness of DeWine's fear-mongering, and the debates over what 'truth' really is, and how many weeks it takes to "Flatten the Curve". (Apparently, that answer must be "at least 52", not 2 or 4.)

Moving back to Downtown Cleveland in June, there were maybe two truly happy summer weeks. I'd been blessed to obtain a prime apartment at the building I used to live at. From a bird's eye view, I could see more and more people returning to the Flats. Shooters had bands playing every weekend night. People were losing their fear of eating at a restaurant. Life seemed to be returning to normal. It was July 3rd, a beautiful sunny day; I rode my bicycle around town; saw people enjoying life again.

Meanwhile: Governor DeWine, desperate to stop Ohio from celebrating the holiday, was stirring the pot about the sudden need for 'masks', even though the COVID stats were down. The Mayor of Cleveland followed suit with one of his customary and cowardly 'late evening' announcements: This time, a citywide mask mandate, "effective 8p". And while it took the Governor another 2 weeks to issue his Statewide unconstitutional mandate...it was enough. The rest of the 4th of July holiday had visibly diminished traffic at the restaurants and bars nearby. And the bands at Shooters soon stopped.

Ever since the Statewide 'mask mandate', and then the curfew, the City hasn't been the same. And neither has the State. There are rural areas...RURAL areas with meager populations...under the same draconian Statewide curfew and restrictions as the urban metropolises. The Governor has gleefully encouraged private mega corporations like Walmart, Target, and every other shop, to be the fascist enforcement arms for the unconstitutional masking and social distancing regulations that he would not otherwise have the manpower to enforce. For any business bold enough to fail to comply, they must bear the risk of having a random visit from DeWine's Gestapo Health Inspectors to fine them or shut them down.

The Governor's foolishness is not over. Recently, he's announced his plan for 'flex curfew': Where the number of hospital beds in-use are directly tied to the time of day that we can be 'out'. (Or, to put the emphasis more correctly: How late businesses can operate.) SCIENCE, I suppose? -- I dare anyone to find a doctor who can provide solid evidence that an hour of the day in the evening, one way or the other, is directly relative to how many sick people there are in hospital beds.

When will the FANTASY end, and our Government be put back in control of We The People? On that matter, WE elected quite a roster of people to MAKE LAWS. Some of them are in this very room. We elected Governor DeWine to enforce laws; not create them. But, the fact that he and/or his Administration has both written pseudo laws and then also aggressively enforced them, is another proof of malfeasance of office and criminal behavior. We could go through a list of the ways in which the Governor has enslaved and seemingly perpetually intends to enslave the citizens of this State under his ONE BRANCH RULE. The need for new legislation is dubious: You could band together right now, march down to the local prosecutor's office, and demand that they bring criminal charges against Governor DeWine. There's any number of civil rights violations, or violations of the Ohio or Federal Constitutions that he could be charged on, and subsequently convicted of by a jury of his peers.

But, if we MUST create new legislation to make it even more clear: Then SB 22 is it. We need to enforce a 30 day expiration on any order issued by the Governor or the Health Director. We need rapid Legislative oversight on these absurd rules. DO SOMETHING. Reign this runaway dictator in.

There is one truth which We The People have come to understand very well in this past year:

If you allow your government to have unlimited power...it will rule with unlimited power.

This is the United States of America. This is the Great State of Ohio, which as its motto is the words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: "With God all things are possible." I believe that it is possible that you assembled here, will gather your peers without haste to do what is right, and pass the SB 22 legislation while we still remember what true freedom looks and feels like.

Thank you very much.

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