

Anne Johnson
SB22 - Proponent Written Testimony
Government Oversight and Reform Committee
February 3, 2021

Madam Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Craig, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB22.

My name is Anne Johnson, and I am a concerned citizen asking for your support of SB22 to restore the balance of power to Ohio government and return a voice to we the people.

Like most this past year, my family and I have ridden the "Coronacoaster" of ups and downs in navigating this pandemic. What started as a general willingness to do our part by staying home, making masks for local hospitals, etc., rapidly dissolved into incredulous shock that we were watching our lives and freedoms being chiseled away every day, with no recourse or voice in what felt like illogical madness. We never once doubted that Covid 19 was real or potentially deadly. Of course we wanted lives to be saved, and we did our best to follow the protocols. But what we experienced and saw around us were far more lives being thrown in upheaval as the result of nonstop governmental orders, lockdowns, and, perhaps most disturbingly, fear-mongering citizens into reducing fellow human beings to dangerous carriers of disease to be avoided at all costs. Even a routine trip to the grocery store became a stressful event. In retrospect, I can say without hesitation that worry about an unknown virus is minimal compared to fear of a governor and an unelected health official with unlimited power.

While I could speak to the financial, physical, and mental toll this extreme stress has caused for both my husband and me, I am writing today specifically to stand up for my children.

We should never force the burden of mitigating the potential spread of disease through the drastic and isolating measures of this past year on the shoulders (or faces) of children, whose likelihood to suffer negative effects from Covid 19 are statistically low. While I am proud that my three children have compassion for the sick and the strength and maturity to overcome adversity, it sickens me that an unchecked governor is the adversary abusing their resiliency. A governor who should, by all standards of his oath of office, lead by example and protect their constitutional rights - not restrict them. A governor who should, by the wisdom of our Constitution, be kept in check by the properly functioning legislative and judicial branches of government.

Children have a remarkable ability to quickly and accurately spot an untruth or injustice. This past August, mere days before school was to start, Governor DeWine once again went back on his word. Whereas the plan to re-open schools allowed each school the reasonable freedom to operate in conjunction with the local health departments, Governor DeWine suddenly mandated masks for all school children. My 10 year-old son, increasingly disturbed by all the oppressive changes in his world, cried out in frustration, "You know the broken chains at the feet of the

Statue of Liberty? Well I think someone must've tied them back up again!" This is not the America I want for my children.

I believe SB22 is a logical step in the right direction to honor our freedom while working together to respond to an emergency. While I understand the initial caution at the beginning of this pandemic and the duty to care for the vulnerable, we as a society now know more about this virus and how to manage it (and perhaps we could even learn more about achieving true health if we were open to advice from alternative natural health experts). It's time for the Ohio legislature to stand up and reclaim their constitutional duty to represent its citizens and maintain the system of checks and balances for which our three branches of government were founded.

Please vote Yes on SB22.

Thank you for your time and consideration.