

Testimony of Shannon Kazee
Proponent, Senate Bill 22
Government Oversight and Reform Committee
February 2, 2021

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig, and honorable members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee:

Thank you for hearing my testimony on Senate Bill 22. My name is Shannon Kazee, and I'm a 17-year-old homeschooled student in my senior year. I am a competitive ballroom dancer, rock singer, and specialty baker.

NO PROMS, NO SPORTS, NO GRADUATIONS, NO JOBS, NO PLAYDATES, NO HOLIDAYS. NO QUESTIONS, NO CONCERNS, NO REAL HELP. STAY HOME. STAY SAFE. FLATTEN THE CURVE. WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER.

This is what people my age faced this past year. We are the least affected by this virus. Much research says we don't really pass it to others as much as feared. But in many ways, we are the most targeted and impacted by the response.

I come from a diverse family with many medical issues -- including my brother with extreme short gut and autism and myself who overcame epilepsy. We stay positive and proactive and don't dwell on things we cannot change. We do not let fear rule us. We work to keep ourselves healthy from the food we eat to the exercise we get to the products we use. Our mantra is to be radically kind, inclusive, and free.

This year was unlike any other. I watched as many friends expressed extreme unhappiness and hopelessness but believed they had no options. Every week the guidance about what we should be doing seemed to change. If you pushed back, you were trying to kill grandma, didn't care, were going to get COVID and die. At one point, when going outside was still somewhat acceptable, I met with a few friends at a park. We stayed socially distant, and one of my friends had on a mask in the heat. I watched as, against all logic and science, he took off the mask when he got hot, wiped his face to remove sweat, and then put it back on. But he was the hero. He was the one doing the right thing. He cared.

Bullying has been sanctioned and codified; a new class system and segregation have been ushered in. Young people repeated the Orwellian catchphrases released by authorities without questioning. And the mean girls now have a socially elevated platform. 2020 was the year to affirm and denounce various issues, even if you were a pretty terrible person in real life. All that mattered was you did what you were told was right.

Pardon me for trying to stay active, for doing what I can to hold on to the last bits of normal life that exist, for refusing to inhale my own CO2 and mask bacteria buildup, for wanting to breathe freely, for needing to breathe freely. Pardon me for being raised to question and draw my own conclusions. Pardon me for thinking that health means a little bit more than staying home, staying worried, and wearing masks. Pardon me for being concerned about all of the disposable

products being used or the new sanitizers that burn my eyes and hands and make it difficult to breathe. How safe are those? What are the long-term effects?

I respectfully ask that you vote YES on SB 22 so that more voices are brought to the table in times of outbreaks and so that no political or social agendas can take precedence over personal freedoms, civil rights, and a balanced and inclusive scientific view of health.