

Chairman Roegner, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the State and Local Government Committee:

I am testifying today in favor of SB22. At the beginning of our response to the Covid-19 virus, we were told by statisticians and virologist to expect the worst. However, the worst never came. The models were significantly incorrect.

However, the state of Ohio continued to enforce mandate after mandate for our "health". This is what the mandates did for my health. They delayed on-going doctor visits for which I was seeing a gastrologist for, by six months. I had a dentist refuse to see me for a broken tooth, to which I had to switch dentists in order to receive a root canal and a crown. By switching dentists, this caused my insurance not to pick up a bill for \$1500. My wife, who was recovering from foot surgery, had to complete follow-up appointments alone. No ability to have a chaperone to hear first-hand how to optimize recovery and provide comfort in an otherwise stressful environment. My children were supposed to start orthodontics, but were delayed because the facilities at first were not taking new customers and now will not allow both parents to be in the room together to make important decisions. These mandates have not increased medical care, they have delayed medical care and incurred additional costs to me as I live in Ohio.

Whereas the State may not have directly told doctors to prioritize Covid-19 patients over other ailments, the leadership bolstered fear in the public and health industries that nothing else matters more than the safety of society from Covid-19. One person led the State to prioritize care despite models immediately being determined wrong. One person led the crusade to turn neighbor on neighbor about masks and how your humanity has no importance. One person promoted separating families for some slogan about social distancing. One person determined whose livelihood was essential or not.

The irony is that in the name of health, a single person in Ohio is able to unilaterally enact policies without the representation of the people and incur effects to the middle class that does the opposite. Medical care decreased, not improved. Instead of providing care to the individual, the mandates have dispersed care to this faceless, ambiguous society. This entity that cannot have medical ailments, cannot have financial burdens, and cannot protest. It's individuals that need to be treated for what's currently affecting them. It's individuals that are under the pressure of financial obligations. It's individuals that are crying out against the crime of being silenced, humiliated, and ignored.

SB22 has my full backing. There is a reason why government has Congressmen, to speak for the individual. Ten months is more than enough time to enact policy using discussions by representatives of the individuals to balance rights, safety, and needs. Currently, our policies allow one person to propagate his image of society without regard to the individual. This should not be and SB22 will restore the balance that is cherished by the citizens of Ohio.

Benjamin Leiby