

## **SB 22 Proponent Testimony**

Laura McNamara-Smith, M.Ed., LPC  
Concerned Citizen and Parent

Government Oversight and Reform Committee

February 3, 2021

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

Thank you for this opportunity to allow written testimony for SB 22. I am an Ohio licensed professional counselor and a certified school guidance counselor. I am also the mother of three school-aged children.

I am **in support of SB 22** because I believe that Ohio should establish legislative oversight of the Governor's and Health Department's executive ordering powers. The creation of the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee would be a positive step in founding an additional system of checks and balances to help maintain that the executive branch of our state government doesn't become too powerful.

I also believe that the General Assembly and the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee should have the ability to rescind orders or mandates directed by the Governor and the Ohio Department of Health. A 30-day public health state of emergency order is appropriate enough given adequate evidence of an emergency, and provided that the Governor reports their actions in response to the emergency to both the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Once more, **the ability to declare a public health state of emergency should only be allowed for 30 days and should not be extended without approval by the General Assembly or the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee.**

Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health have worked together for over 47 consecutive weeks to systematically disrupt the lives of almost every Ohioan. They have done so by using taxpayer monies to create propaganda to support their unlawful mandates, shutter businesses and schools, cancel a primary election, issue a statewide curfew, and Governor DeWine has publically laughed at previous efforts made by the legislature to reign in his powers and stated that he would veto any such efforts, which he did in December of 2020.

The Governor's and ODH's almost year long emergency orders have negatively impacted small businesses, societal cohesiveness, and the mental, emotional, educational and developmental health and well-being of children, adolescents, and adults. **Suicide rates, homicide rates, drug and alcohol abuse, depression, anxiety, and school absences and drop out rates**

**have significantly increased amongst Ohioans since March of 2020.** The psychological, emotional, and social damage done to today's youth may take years or even decades to recover. It is also with grave declaration that the elderly population have arguably been the most affected by the emergency orders as many have been forcibly isolated, deprived of proper medical care, denied any physical contact with loved ones, and have seen a drastic decline in physical and mental health. It is a travesty to know that a significant number of the elderly population died without the comfort of family by their side this past year. What has happened over the last 11 months by one elected leader and one unelected leader from the same executive branch is outrageous. **We must put a stop to this abuse of power.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **in support of SB 22.**

Laura McNamara-Smith, M.Ed., LPC  
Ashville, Ohio