

Proponent Testimony for S.B. 22

Thank you Chair Roegner, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig, and Government Oversight and Reform Committee Members for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony today concerning S.B. 22, which serves to establish legislative oversight over Governor's and health orders.

My name is Judi Phelps. I am a wife, a mom and a small business owner of a training center and shooting range in the Hocking Hills region of southeast Ohio.

I am shocked that nearly one year into the unlawful lock down of our great state, that I stand before you today to implore you (as elected officials) to fast-track this bill to a full vote.

I am outraged that in the previous General Assembly, former Senate President Larry Obhof conspired against We, the People, by stonewalling the veto override vote on S.B. 311 which would have served a similar purpose to that of S.B. 22 and put an end to this malicious assault on Ohioans.

Mr. Obhof lied to us and those lies cost people their lives and their livelihoods and continues to do so. He justified his behavior by stating that even if the Senate did pass the bill in its chamber, which was required to advance the bill to the House, that the House "didn't have the votes". We all know he lied because the House released to the public a petition signed by 60 House members reflecting that they did, in fact, have the commitment of the Representatives necessary to override the veto and were willing to convene up to the 11:59 P.M. deadline on December 31st.

Back in March 2020 at the outset of this charade, I was interviewed by the Columbus Dispatch at a protest I attended in front of this Statehouse against the initial call for a "flatten the curve" quarantine. I smelled a rat then and it stinks to high heaven now!

The issues that plagued our state then (drug overdose deaths, suicide, homicide, domestic violence, and sex-trafficking of women and children, to name a few) have been exacerbated by this continued lockdown and are the true public health emergencies that we face. Yet, those issues have largely been ignored by the governor, the health department, media, and the so-called "experts", in favor of fearmongering and propagandizing the false claim that COVID-19 is going to kill us all.

In his January 11, 2021 news release, Attorney General Dave Yost published the results of an analysis of his own task force, the Scientific Committee on Opioid Prevention and Education (SCOPE) reflecting *"an increase of [opioid] deaths in 67 percent of Ohio's counties"*. [1]

In one of the hardest-hit counties, coroner Dr. Anahi Ortiz reported that *“the number of overdose deaths in Franklin County in the first six months of 2020 is up more than 70% compared to the same time frame in 2019.”* [2]

ABC6 published an article on January 21, 2021 entitled *“Student suicides raise concerns about the cost of school closures”* following a report that 18 students in Clark County School District (Las Vegas, NV) committed suicide since in-person learning was suspended due to COVID.

“When we started to see the uptick in children taking their lives, we knew it wasn’t just the COVID numbers we need to look at anymore,” Clark County Superintendent Jesus Jara told The Times. [3]

These teen suicides are not isolated to Nevada; we are seeing the same trends in Ohio and throughout the nation where lockdowns and forced isolation continue to threaten the mental and physical well-being of children and adults alike.

Lockdowns, business, and school closures are also causing spikes in domestic violence. According to a story published by wtnh.com [4]:

“From April to June 2020 experts now point to a startling 75% increase in the number of calls from victims quarantined for months with people who hurt them when compared to the same time period last year. 60% of those callers had never sought help from the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) before.”

I could continue, but I honestly believe most of you are keenly aware of these facts and would agree that the governor’s so-called “cure to fight the enemy [COVID-19] has been far worse than the virus itself.

Please remove any bureaucratic red tape or obstacles in your paths and move S.B. 22 swiftly through the Senate and on to the House for their vote. We are depending on you to save the jobs and lives of Ohioans so that we may begin the process of rebuilding stronger than before.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to address your questions.

Sincerely,

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Sources:

[1] <https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/January-2021/Record-Surges-in-Opioid-Overdoses-Prompts-AG-Yost>

[2]<https://www.10tv.com/article/news/local/franklin-county-overdose-deaths-2020/530-179bb3e0-1003-4cb3-9517-b55e2734c885>

[3]<https://abc6onyourside.com/news/nation-world/student-suicides-raise-concerns-about-the-cost-of-school-closures>

[4]<https://www.wtnh.com/domesticviolence-awareness/covid-19-leads-to-rise-in-domestic-violence/>