

Testimony of Jamie Rathod

2/2/2021

Proponent
Senate Bill 22

Chair Kristina D. Roegner, Vice Chair Rob McCulley, Ranking Member Hearcel F. Craig, and honorable members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Senate Bill 22. For almost a year now, Ohioans have been under the most egregious overreach of emergency orders, put into place by the Ohio Department of Health and Governor Dewine. We were told throughout this pandemic that many of these orders would only be for a short period of time, two weeks until we flattened the curve. In lieu of flattening the curve our schools were canceled, festivities banned, small businesses closed, sporting events ceased and even our children's outdoor playgrounds became fortresses of caution tape and signs of DO NOT ENTER. We were told to shelter in place for two weeks, but after those two weeks the restrictions only became more constricting with each passing week.

The daily press conferences only provided information related to gloom and doom, without ever acknowledging those who without incident recovered from the Sars CoV2 infection, which has a survivability rate of 99.74%, leaving many Ohioans paralyzed in fear. The information presented to us from the beginning was based on an empirical model from Neil Ferguson that proved to be absolutely incorrect. But nonetheless our Governor waited until the month of July to put into effect a mandatory mask order, one of the hottest months of the year. A day before this mask mandate was put into effect, I was met with an emergency situation, driving north on Coventry in Cleveland Heights, I saw an African-American elderly woman trying to lay down on the brick wall next to the side walk. She looked disoriented and I was afraid she might be having a heat stroke. I

stopped the car a few feet away from her and ran up to see if she was okay. Keeping my distance not to startle her, as I approached closer I saw that she had a mask in her hand. I asked her if she had been walking around with the mask on. She said she was wearing it but started to become light headed and thought she should try to lay down. I explained to her that I understood she was wearing the mask out of an abundance of caution, but I assured her that being outside in 90 degree heat, with an apparatus over her face (mask) while one and no one in close proximity was dangerous, as it does hamper your ability to breathe. Just then a neighbor across the street came to give her a drink of water and we arranged to have the neighbor drive her home after contacting her son due our concern for her safety. After Governor Dewine's order was placed the following day I contacted the Cleveland Heights Police department to have a conversation concerning this very incident. Unfortunately, I was told there was nothing they could do and that my grievances are with the Ohio Department of Health and the Governor.

This only trickled down further when we were told now our kids have to mask up for 6 1/2 hours per day in order to participate in, in person education. My son's school didn't want to mask any of the children, because based on the research, children were never consider a venerable population to begin with. Our school had already advised us parents that they would accept the burden of responsibility by wearing the mask, because they didn't want to put that type of restriction on the children, based on science and logic. However, orders are orders and many of our children who didn't get medical exemptions had to succumb to this very ignorant policy. As a mother of an 11 year old son, I can tell you from firsthand experience that this entire last year has been the most difficult in every aspect. Did the governor or the ODH take into consideration that when you cover the face of a child they feel cut off from world. There's no more warm smiles to see, hardly any interaction can take place with a muffled voice that needs to remain 6 feet away, and they go to school to learn and be with their peers but there is no fun left. What would you say to your 11 year old son who ask you what is the point of waking up to tomorrow when it's just the same nightmare as the day before. It's just awful to watch the happiness of a child be stripped away by tyrannical policies that never seem to abate. My son said school has become a prison,

the kids can't even breathe fresh air when they go outside to play, to say its disgraceful would be an understatement.

Ohio needs SB22 like these kids need fresh air! I implore you to please vote yes on SB 22 and put the power of emergency orders back into the hands of the legislature where they belong. This has gone on long enough and you have the power to stop it here and now, please do it for our children and the rest of Ohioans.

Kindest Regards,
Jamie Rathod