

Testimony of Lenore R. Rinicella; Educator  
Support SB 22  
Government Oversight and Reform  
February 3, 2021

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

I am testifying today in favor of SB22 as an Ohio resident deeply worried about courses of action being taken under the current emergency powers and the everlasting dire effects it's having on all citizens. Over the course of the last 10 months, the devastating consequences of the health orders have proven to cause far greater harm to Ohio and its citizens.

Ohio has been under emergency orders for 10 months, with truly no end objective. Our businesses, our economy, our social and emotional well-being, and the future of our children are truly at jeopardy.

Currently, the Ohio's health order includes a "mask mandate". Also included within the mask recommendations are exemptions. One said exemption being medical. Additionally, children 10 and under are recommended to not wear a face covering. While exemptions may be in place, Ohio's governor refuses to acknowledge and iterate the fact that an infinite number of Ohioans are unable to wear any face coverings. Ohio's Governor hired a team of individuals to literally harass and interrogate businesses with clientele who may be mask-free under the exemptions. Since July of 2020, my daughter and I, who are both medically exempt from wearing a face covering, have been accosted, berated, and insulted because we are unable to wear a mask. Ohio's governor has effectively turned the citizens of Ohio on each other. We have suffered an immense amount of discrimination and harassment. My 8yr old daughter, like so many other children, is suffering immensely with the emotional and social trauma from these "emergency orders". How much longer will my child have to live in such an evil place with grown adults berating her because of her medical condition? How many nightmares do I have to rescue my baby from while she is screaming and sobbing, telling me "she doesn't want to live in this world anymore!" Who is responsible for the infinite harm under these "emergency orders"?

As an educator and a mum of three children, I'm deeply horrified of the toll these tyrannical orders have on our children. The social, emotional, and overall psychological impact on our future will be everlasting. We currently stand to lose an entire generation of problem solvers and critical thinkers. Our children must be in school, unmasked; with no restrictions. Can we afford the loss of doctors, civic leaders, and scientists? Since our children were forced into remote learning, over half of lower income children have substantially fallen behind. That's not only morally wrong; it's utterly absurd for our future and our economy. We're going to lose 50% of our leaders and our scientists. Aside from the above noted, our children are suffering immeasurably with the isolation and inability of simply being "kids". The suicide rate, drug usage, and abuse of our children have increased significantly. Our children need social and

emotional support, along with resources for complete mental health immediately. We will likely never be able to undo the harmful damage we have unnecessarily caused our children.

The scale of economic, social and emotional damage already transpiring due to lost learning indicates the real emergency with which Ohio needs to plan our next policy moves. Like so many aspects of these orders, the impact on children and young people will take the form of a long term crisis rather than a short term problem. We must act immediately to protect our children and their future. One of the most important drivers in human capital investment continues to remain closed; our schools! Perhaps we need to refer to history to fully grasp the severity of what will transpire; “Some modeling suggests that the loss of learning during the extraordinary systemic crisis of World War II still had negative impact on former students’ lives some 40 years later”

(George Psacharopoulos Adjunct Professor - Global Human Development - Georgetown University, November, 2020). We must act NOW to save our children!

Additionally, countless businesses were forced closed with no ability to reopen and/or operate under such draconian measures. A daunting number of businesses that have been operating for many decades have lost everything they have worked so very hard for. We are left with abandoned buildings and empty store fronts. The repercussions on our economy are truly incalculable. We must reopen our economy straightway, with zero restrictions in order to salvage what we may.

SB22 bill restores the balance of power to where it should be, between the three, COEQUAL branches of government, and finally gives a VOICE to the PEOPLE of Ohio via their legislators during a declared emergency.

Our businesses, our economy, our social and emotional well-being and the future of our children are on the line. Our state cannot thrive under the continued oppressive and unrestrained orders of our over-reaching Governor.

Please stand up and protect our personal liberties and the future of Ohio by voting YES on SB22!

Most Cordially,

Ms. Lenore Rinicella  
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