

SB 22 Proponent Testimony

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State and Local Government Committee

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To Chairwoman Kristina Roegner, Vice- Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig and Honorable Members of the Ohio State and Local Government Committee-

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony regarding SB 22. **I am a proponent of SB 22** because I believe that the governor of Ohio and the un-elected director of the Ohio Department of Health have exhibited and exerted authority over Ohioans beyond the scope of their designated roles. We have seen increasing mandates which restrict freedoms of individuals, businesses, and other groups over the past 10 months. This amount of power should never be given to the executive branch and an un-elected official without the balance of power from our elected representatives. We have chosen representatives to be our voice in matters like these and yet our current law leaves us voiceless against the Department of Health.

We Ohioans possess certain unalienable rights to decide our place of employment, to receive in-person education as we choose, vote in person, shop in person, visit with our loved ones in the manner we chose -whether at home or in a nursing home, have an advocate with us in person to any medical appointment or hospitalization, and decide upon mask wearing. I, as an individual, have the right to decide what possible risks to my health and safety exist, and take measures to protect myself as I see fit. I, as a nurse practitioner, could offer testing and treatment options to my patients, but I never could force them into any certain decision-nor would I even have wanted to. I believe we must each take personal responsibility for our own health and be willing to live with any consequences of that choice-favorable or not. The governor has not only acted like a physician for Ohio but has also decided for Ohioans by mandates, well outside the boundaries of his authority. These have been allowed to persist for an amount of time well beyond what is reasonable unchecked. We appear to be losing freedoms now almost daily and yet, this loss of freedom will not result in stopping a virus that has been circulating for a over year now- as data now shows.

I am increasingly concerned watching the data misrepresentation being reported by our Governor. His Ohio Public Health Advisory System is nothing short of a map of fear where the goalposts changed when the data did not suit his intended goals. As Franklin county reached a point where it was going to drop of out "red" altogether, suddenly the rules were changed. Now we must a new goalpost of cases per 100,000 rule- all the while there was nor limits on testing which would drive numbers upwards, no checks on the accuracy of testing, and testing with cycling well above usual thresholds of accuracy. I have also watched the scale of hospitalization utilization numbers changed all to fool the casual observer into thinking numbers remain alarming and not that in true, we are improving. It is these discrepancies which give me great pause and concern for the judgment of one left unchecked by representatives of We the People. Lockdowns do not work. Viruses do not care about them. Viruses do not observe curfews. Government regulations banning families from visiting their elderly members who needed long term care in assisted living care and nursing homes didn't stop a virus- the virus still coursed through. It just deprived the residents of much needed family observation and interaction and left them potentially receiving subpar care and isolated to feel abandoned and depressed. All of which leads to decreased overall well-being and contributed to increased deaths among this population. We

can never get back the children we have lost to suicides from what has been done to schools and sports. We cannot magically restore families, and jobs, and homes that have been lost as a consequence to these decisions. Our state has lost businesses and revenue and soon will lose constituents as families choose to move away to “more free” states.

SB 22 is an important checks and balance that I believe our founding fathers cherished when they made us a constitutional republic. We need you as our representatives to have a clear role and voice in matters like these. I appreciate the ability to submit this testimony to you and I urge you to uphold your oath to the constitution and protect our unalienable rights by voting **yes to SB 22**.

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