

Testimony in Opposition of Senate Bill 22
Government Oversight and Reform Committee
Melanie Farkas
February 10, 2021

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

Thank you for hearing my testimony against Senate Bill 22. I am a full-time working mother of two elementary school-aged children. I believe Senate Bill 22 is a dangerous step toward science denial in Ohio. This past year has certainly been difficult, and for my family, December was the worst.

My kids and I are three of the nearly a million Ohioans who have had COVID-19. Thankfully, my kids had mild cases -- my worst fear has been my son, who has severe asthma, getting really sick. My case was fairly severe though I did not have to be in the hospital. Because we closely followed the evidence-based recommendations of isolation and quarantine, we were able to prevent my husband and in-laws from getting COVID-19, and my husband was able to be by his mother's side when she died of an unrelated illness just before Christmas.

I am not a scientist or a physician and that's why it's important to me to listen closely to what those studying this disease, treatments and vaccines are saying. And with news of a new more contagious strain growing dangerously quickly in the U.S., this bill would further tie up necessary and life-saving decisions that may be made by our governor and public health leaders.

My family survived COVID-19 and my father-in-law is getting his second vaccine next week. But nearly 12,000 Ohioans are not so lucky -- 12,000 mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and children. I thank God we have effective vaccines that will help us get to a place where we can be together again. Until then, we all must do our part.

I ask you to please consider voting no on this harmful legislation for our state. Thank you for this opportunity.