

Opponent Testimony for SB 22

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Chairman Roegner, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig, and Members of the Government Oversight & Reform Committee

Pandemics have occurred through history. Masks are not new. Social distancing is not new. Closing schools or other facilities is not new. The American Colonies, as they had no vaccine program, used many of these measures to control disease outbreaks as best as they could.

Refusal to listen to the medical and scientific communities is also not new. It took decades for the general acceptance of antiseptic and aseptic procedures that prevents cross-contamination of bacteria. People resisted the idea that cigarettes could cause cancer. Polio was blamed on Italian immigrants, ice cream, automobile exhaust, and even sharks. Astrology was used to understand the bubonic plague.

Pandemics come under control when they are controlled by leadership and some intervening measure, not when they are allowed to spread wildly because everyone decides whether they would like to comply. While it is true that few diseases are eradicated completely, a notable exception being smallpox, most can be contained.

SB 22 gives the legislature overreach power through legislative resolution which cannot be vetoed. This is a violation of separation of powers and unconstitutional.

I'm sure that you will hear much testimony about school conditions for children and mental health. School conditions in Ohio have been inequitable for years, with buildings in disrepair, with overcrowding and unsafe facilities, with a lack of modern equipment, materials, and resources. Schools have been a misery for many students for many years.

I have experienced Ohio's state-run mental health system firsthand. It could use some serious support. How many complaining now have truly supported their schools and worked to fund them in a way that supports all children? Have they voted for levies that support our mental health system? So why are they suddenly concerned about the conditions of schools and mental health?

I am currently working in a school operating at 50% capacity. I am amazed at the resilience of middle-schoolers to adapt and wear masks throughout the day, distance from each other, and generally behave better than many adults I have seen over the past year. I have not heard one student complaint about the measures the school has gone to in order to keep them safe. I would hope our legislature would present as good a model of civility and understanding as these adolescents have to the rest of Ohio.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.