

02/08/2021

Dear Chairman Roegner, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Craig, Senator Lang of my district, and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to compose a testimony in opposition of SB 22. I grew up in Hamilton, Ohio, graduated from The Ohio State University in 2015 with a degree in neuroscience, and now attend the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine where I will be earning an MD and a PhD in epidemiology. I wish to be present for this session, but unfortunately I have an exam and, as my parents always remind me, grades come first.

I am testifying today in opposition of SB22 as an Ohio resident and future physician deeply concerned about this bill's effects on health in Ohio. I am concerned that this bill will vastly restrict the ability of the Ohio Department of Health to respond to health threats to our state, instead giving power to elected officials who may not have training in medicine or public health.

We have seen the beneficial effects of the orders from the Ohio Department of Health. According to the CDC, Ohio has seen fewer Covid-19 deaths (99 per 100,000 people) than all our bordering states except Kentucky. This is thanks to the decisive actions of our Department of Health and the hard work of the people of Ohio.

On a personal note, my mom passed away from lung cancer when I was three. My grandmother, my mom's mother, is currently in remission after being diagnosed with stage IV ovarian cancer. Due to the chemotherapy medications she must take every day to keep her cancer at bay, her immune system is extremely weak. I worry everyday that she could get Covid-19 while she is at the grocery store or church. With her weakened immune system, the virus could very easily replicate unabated in her body until her lungs are unable to work, her kidneys fail, and her life leaves her body. I do not want to lose my Mamaw at age 24 after already losing my mom. Thankfully, I live in the great state of Ohio with a strong Department of Health that mandated masks in public buildings, keeping Ohioans like my Mamaw safe. I am so proud to live in a state where the Department of Health reviews the most current science and crafts orders with the sole purpose of saving lives.

This bill is dangerous. It places all power for keeping Ohioans healthy and safe in the hands of people who likely do not have the training to make public health decisions. Our Department of Health has been an example to the nation of finding the balance between keeping people safe and limiting economic hardship. I hope that you all, especially my elected official Senator Lang, will vote no SB22 and leave the power for keeping Ohioans safe in the hands of people who have trained their entire life for this responsibility.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to give my written testimony.

Sincerely,  
Alexander Sprague  
Hamilton, Ohio  
513-869-9741  
spraguax@mail.uc.edu