

Chair Roegner, Vice chair Mccolley, Ranking member Craig, and the honored members of the government oversight and reform committee”...

My name is Kristen Ashenbach.

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony...

I work as a licensed school-based therapist. Our school re-opened this past Fall in person, but many of my kids stayed home. Some are still home. Some haven't seen a friend in almost a year, or rarely venture from the house. Some have gained so much weight from being stuck inside they re-appeared in school unrecognizable and unable to walk long distances from class to class. Some have not had the privilege of engaging in extra-curriculars such as volleyball or drama, but got to watch friends participate still in football, wrestling, and soccer. For others, engaging in a sport this year was all they had to look forward to as their mother and father relapsed from all the pressure. For others still I have seen Social Anxiety skills stagnate instead of improve, due to inability to engage socially with others to improve social skills. I have seen anxiety increase as we are told to fear the possibility of the virus literally being everywhere--an ugly, sneaky miscreant of a virus--lurking in the false allure of a comforting hug, a beautiful smile, a gentle kiss, a friendly hand to hold. Our children are being taught to fear and stay away from each other, instead of connecting and loving one another. Others have not had real meals and live only on snacks, as the school was the source of their one or two hot meals for the day.

What's worse is, even though mental health problems have risen sharply in children and teens, many referrals are still missed from the kids who stayed home. They simply are getting “missed” and not getting proper mental health care.

Many kids are on video games during times not doing online school, sometimes very late at night, then developing poor sleep schedules due to not needing to be up at a certain time. A balanced circadian rhythm is important for kids and developing good, strong mental health. These kids aren't developing or maintaining the discipline this year to make them tough and resilient to life's many exciting challenges. Instead, we are supposed to teach them to “fear giving grandma C-rona” for some “greater good”, when we used to teach them ways to be resilient to life's greatest difficulties. Now they are learning to cower and avoid, to isolate and take away the ability to see their neighbors' face. This is how children learn the important concept of “empathy”—by seeing facial expressions in others. If they cannot see this, I wonder what will be the result.

Our children have no hope. Dewine's tactic of “no end in sight” gaslighting phenomena creates and stirs up anxiety in people. Humans are much calmer and able to deal with life when there are “lights at the ends of our tunnel.” Instead, Dictator Dewine coaxes us to listen to his latest Big Brother press release to hear what new rewards he will dole out for our excellent behavior-through-a-plandemic skills. This is antithetical to teaching our next generation to “think for themselves”, be leaders, and decide themselves what is best for their body, because many of them can tell the mask is NOT good for them. The studies and articles coming out on mask literature is overwhelming and appalling, If the ramifications of wearing a mask for long periods of time can be bacterial pneumonia, lung cancer, hypoxia, brain damage, etc., we owe

it to them to produce literature on the efficacy of masks. I have yet to see one, but see the opposite—about its deleterious effects—all the time.

There are no mask breaks in school, as was promised initially. Everyone has brought the fear from the Tell-a-vision back to the classroom, even during physical education. Educators walk through hallways and cafeterias with a measuring tape extended six feet—what a visual! How interesting the “six feet” rule came from a 6th grader’s science project, and even more interesting is that the human heart extends its energy field at least six feet. Kids need each other. Humans need each other. But they need freedom most. Lockdowns, curfews, increased mandates—are all dividing us, dividing families—which are the building blocks of society—and destroying our hope for a future. Let each person, each child, decide for themselves how they would like to handle and approach the volatility and fragility of life—which may come in viral form for some, in suicide and drug overdose in others, and in others, dying of loneliness. I support SB 22; hold our leaders and health department accountable for the job loss, business loss, and devastation our kids are growing up into.

Thank you,
Kristen Ashenbach, LPC.