

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

I am writing today in support of SB22. The unprecedented mandates that have extended from weeks into months have had serious and detrimental effects on my family and many I know, and I believe, most citizens of our beloved state of Ohio. This bill can not only correct wrongs done, but prevent future trespass upon the rights of all Ohioans to live and work freely.

I am a wife, mother, and caregiver. I am also a librarian, which I point out merely to say that I am a seeker of authoritative information, and I take research and information seriously. I have personally experienced (and continue to watch loved ones suffer from) the effects of lockdown, closures, and mask mandates. For the sake of brevity, I will mention a few situations in my life, but there are more.

My daughter's mental health has suffered tremendously due to these orders. We homeschool, and no co-ops and no extra-curricular activities, without end in sight, has been beyond challenging for my 12 year old, only child. She had just overcome anxiety issues before these things took place, and was blossoming and growing beautifully: making friends and excelling in dance. These extreme measures have caused regression in this area and we are suffering as a family because of it. It is very difficult to live without hope or sense of a future. The rules regarding the mandates keep changing, and there seems to be no end to the disruption and encroachment on free life. To play politics with the lives of others and their mental health, when the true data show, especially for children, that life can and should go on, is wrong. To never see others' faces, because we are depersonalized and hid behind masks, breaks spirits. While I personally believe science shows mask wearing as ineffective at best, I have no problem if others want to wear them, but they should be optional, a free choice.

In addition to my daughter's struggles, I also help care for elderly relatives. One has been alone in an assisted living facility, shuttered in her room, unable to even dine with friends, let alone see loved ones. Another chose to keep living alone, with us checking on her, to avoid that situation. Because she was alone, she fell and now has a fractured hip. If she would have been in a proper living situation and not afraid of being "locked up," this might not have happened.

I am fortunate to live in a community that has the will and means to support local businesses, but they are still suffering as well. We try to patronize them as much as possible, but it is unfair to see them struggle to stay alive, while stores like Costco and Walmart reap major rewards with extra patronage.

I am asking for our voices to be heard and rights to be protected. I fully support the balance of powers and the legislature being involved in approving extended mandates. Please, for the sake of our citizens, and most importantly, our children, I respectfully ask for the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Renee Booksh
Hudson, OH