

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

Thank you for taking time to hear from Ohioans across the state and the effects the Governor's unlawful mandates have had on us. As I am sure you are aware 87% of coronavirus deaths in Ohio are in the 65+ age category yet all of the mandates are affecting our children.

As a mother of two school-aged children, I have seen first-hand the devastating effects the mandates have had on my children and their friends. These kids have been denied a proper in-person education, their social development has been destroyed as they are constantly being yelled at by teachers and administrators who follow their own guidelines. There is no consistency from district to district or school to school. Suicides and suicide ideation is skyrocketing according to the CDC. Kids are turning to unhealthy coping mechanisms like drugs and alcohol. Wearing masks, all day long, are causing massive headaches, mouth sores, mask acne, mask breath and other negative side effects. Elementary school kids are having masks taped to their noses. Kids are wearing them outside at recess. There are no studies to show what kind of health effects these masks are going to have on these kids in the long term. We all want to breath fresh air, unhindered and not have excess stress added to our other body systems. As an adult, I can go into my office, out to my car, take a walk or do whatever to get fresh air. Some kids are being forced to do strenuous exercising with their airways blocked, contrary to WHO guidance. Do you know why there are no studies to show long term effects of masking? Because up until the coronavirus, no one would have even thought to obstruct the breathing of children or adults. I am tired of "experts" saying this is not a problem. Have you tried to run a mile in a mask and another without? There IS a difference.

While watching my niece play a basketball game the other night. The scorekeeper stopped the game right in the middle of a play, screamed at a mother across the court to pull her mask up. When it was pointed out that his had been below his nose the entire game, he then threw the parent pointing out the hypocrisy out of the gym. Not only did he humiliate the mother, who had lowered her mask to take a drink, he scared the children on the court and the refs officiating the game. Is this the type of Ohio we want to build? Is the bullying that is ongoing the type of environment we want in the state of Ohio?

As I pointed out in the beginning, coronavirus is taking the lives of our elderly. The Governor is taking the lives and livelihoods of all Ohioians without any data to back up the effectiveness of the mandates he is putting in place. Does the virus come out at 11:00 at night but not at 10:00 in the morning? Following the ODH data shows a very different picture than the governor is narrating in his press conferences.

Our country was founded on the three branches of government to stop tyranny from taking hold. A systems of checks and balances was put in place to stop one man from determining at what level we will all exist. It is time for our elected legislatures to step up, take control out of the hands of one man and return this state and our children to their lives, return our God-given freedoms and rights to live life in a manner that we personally chose. Stop trading one generation in the hopes of saving another. Protect our vulnerable and stop tyranny in our state.

Respectfully,
Gretchen Cogan