

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

My name is Wendy Jaqua, and I would like to thank you very much for allowing me to provide testimony regarding Senate Bill 22.

This past year has been very difficult for my stepdaughter. Hannah graduated last May and just as many other children her age, the shutdowns and restrictions robbed her of all the things she had looked forward to throughout her school career. She did not get to enjoy what it was to finally be a senior, she didn't get to participate in her final orchestra concerts, she didn't get to go to prom, she didn't get to graduate with her friends, she didn't get a graduation party....all due to the state mandates and restrictions that were implemented by Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health, who still haven't provided ample data to support these decisions.

We hoped and prayed that things would improve for her by the time she started college in the fall, but no such luck. Due to the restrictions, only one person was allowed to assist her in moving into her dorm room, so my husband did not get to help his only daughter move away to college and he won't ever get that opportunity back. While she has been away at college, she is basically a prisoner in her dorm room as most common areas are closed and her classes are online, so she sits in a tiny dorm room and does online classes. What kind of life is that for a college freshman? How much longer will she have to live like this? How is this good for her mental health? We were made for community, and as good as virtual meetings and classes are, nothing compares to a living, breathing person to connect with. She was sad to have to go back to college after Christmas break because she knew what she was going back to.

The fear mongering, lockdowns and restrictions are making our children anxious, lonely, and scared...so many have gone into deep depression, others have attempted and completed suicide. At what point do we decide that the "cure" is worse than the "disease" for our kids? Isn't it time to let the parents be parents again and people to make their own decisions regarding their own health?

For the well-being of my stepdaughter and all of the other children in our great state, as well as all of the other people that have been negatively impacted by the decisions made by Governor DeWine and the ODH, I firmly believe that it is past time for the state to open fully without any restrictions, curfews or mandates. In addition to opening fully, going forward we need to make sure that there are checks and balances in place that would limit the power of any sitting governor and the ODH by passing SB22.

Thank you,

Wendy Jaqua
419-966-4590