

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

Have you been to a grocery store lately? Have you seen the fear and despondency in people's faces? Have you seen how they are afraid to make eye contact? Afraid to interact with one another? Afraid of all the other people because they have been subliminally conditioned into thinking we are all enemies? As if we are less than human? As if we are out to harm them? As if we *are* the virus? I have. It's making me sick. I dread going to the grocery store. I don't go out anymore unless it's absolutely necessary. I am on the verge of a panic attack when I think about going out because of the affect these mandates have had on society. This is what happens when there are no checks and balances on power - no oversight.

We have seen repeated mandate after mandate handed down by Gov. DeWine based on one-sided, and at times questionable, science. Science evolves. Science has learned so much more about this virus in the past year. Yet the Governor has stubbornly refused to budge on his mandates. The death rate has plummeted yet I fear he will find a way to continue holding his thumb on the residents of Ohio. Numbers are easily manipulated.

The media is sensationalizing this virus, as the media does with everything. Yet the Governor says nothing to assuage the fears of his constituents. It's as if his intent is to see how long he can get people to blindly follow along without doing their own research; without thinking their own thoughts. I personally know people, a variety of ages, who vehemently believe they will catch covid and die if they leave their house.

Can you hear the anxiety and distrust in the words I write? I am at my breaking point. **THIS. MUST. END.** We must have oversight for orders that have questionable constitutional authority. The people who choose our elected officials **MUST** have a voice, or trust will be lost. I voted for Gov. DeWine and started out supporting him when the pandemic hit. As the weeks wore on, my trust and confidence in him eroded. How long are we past "two weeks to flatten the curve"? Ten months? Eleven months?

Despite the fact that I am exhausted and at my breaking point, here are some anecdotes from the past year in my life:

-My favorite aunt died due to neglect at the nursing home she was in. I was just getting ready to visit her when the world shut down. The staff was so afraid of making contact with another human that they failed to notice that she had aspirated a piece of food, which developed into pneumonia. I never got to see her and was not able to attend her funeral. My uncle died four months later, literally of a broken heart. I was unable to visit him or attend his funeral. My heart is broken.

-I work at a foodbank. People lost jobs, visits increased. There was hope at first but now people are feeling hopeless. We try to offer them a bit of cheer when they come in. Despite one volunteer having a questionable CV19 test result, there have been no outbreaks at our food bank. Due to the nature of how we work, we cannot stay socially distanced, although everyone wears masks. Many of our volunteers are retirement age and considered in the "high risk" group. We've lost 90% of our volunteers because they think it is unsafe to be around any people, even small numbers. Many of them have told me they are not leaving their homes until they get the shots.

-Speaking of masks have you seen how some people are wearing them? From what I've seen, we should all have gotten covid by now.

-Everywhere you go people are depressed and despondent. They are feeling isolated and their mental health is suffering. Family members are angry at each other over issues surrounding this virus which have become hyper-politicized.

-The teachers and EMTs that I know have told me that child abuse numbers have plummeted. There are no mandatory reporters in the homes where children are being abused. The only cases being reported are the ones that end up in the ER, sometimes near death.

-Petty and selfish, I know, but I lost an earring that my husband gave to me after the birth of our second child. It caught on my mask when I took it off and I didn't notice until quite some time later. Just a material object, yes, but it had sentimental value and is irreplaceable.

This is why this oversight committee is essential. The people's will must be heard. A single politician cannot be allowed to use fear to control people. I pray people start to wake up and see how they have been manipulated. I pray this ends soon.

Thank you for your time,

Renee Roberts