

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig, and honorable committee members,

Thank you for taking my written testimony regarding SB22. I am in favor of this proposed legislation.

Like many Ohioans, I was more than willing to support the Governor's and Health Department Director's orders in the spring when so little was known about Covid-19. As time has gone on, however, I have seen how our pandemic response laws are in desperate need of modification.

While I was, for a short time, concerned about possibly catching Covid-19 or seeing someone in my family catch this disease, my concerns during the past year quickly changed. Rather than worrying about someone getting sick, I have had to work through worries and anxieties about what my government would do from day to day. I have never felt this uncomfortable about my government before.

I support this legislation for three primary reasons.

First, it restores the balance of governmental powers and puts lawmaking back in the hands of legislators, where it belongs constitutionally. Our representative form of government only does well when legislators are responsible to their constituents. However, because of the current conditions, our legislators have been left out of the decision-making process for Covid-related policies for almost an entire year. This is unacceptable and has left millions of Ohioans with no representation in the decision-making process.

Second, this legislation would allow for more open discussion and debate of best practices, projections, and actual data. This will provide more transparency and improve the public's trust in public health policies. We are often told that decisions are being made according to "the science," but true science is never afraid of opposing viewpoints backed by additional facts. Rather, true science welcomes it.

Finally, this bill still allows for quick, executive action in the face of a true public health emergency, something we can all agree on.

Governments prove themselves over and over again to be too eager to seize additional power in the face of an emergency, but much less eager to give up that power when the emergency has passed. SB22 protects the rights of Ohioans by preventing prolonged government overreach. I ask you to please vote yes on this important legislation.

Thank you,
Kristen Smith
Doylestown, Ohio