

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairman Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the State and Local Government Committee:

Thank you for allowing me proponent testimony for HB 618. I support the bill as the Governor does not have the constitutional authority to enforce mask wearing and to shut down businesses. This is an infringement upon our freedoms. Additionally, the formation of a Retail Compliance Unit is way out of line. We don't live in a police state.

There are studies that show mask wearing is hazardous to our health. It is also not known the long term effects of mask wearing, especially in children forced to wear masks all day. The governor does not have the authority to make citizens wear masks. We live in a country with the freedom to make our own health decisions. Additionally, shutting down businesses is very detrimental to our economy and to the owners and employees. The collateral damage of this pandemic is more detrimental to society than the pandemic itself. The governor needs to be reminded that we are a democracy, not a dictatorship.

One troubling aspect of this bill is the authority given to local health departments. Local health departments are extensions of the state health department and will do what the state tells them. Local health departments should be subject to the decision making of the local commissioners and should not have any repercussions from the state such as withholding funding, etc.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony!

Bobbi Bresson