

## House Bill 618 Proponent Testimony

Camie McCorkle

House State and Local Government Committee

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Chairman Wiggam, Vice-Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and Members of the House State and Local Government Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak and voice proponent testimony for House Bill 618. I am a licensed registered nurse and work at an Ohio hospital. I have worked as nurse for 13 years.

I am a proponent of HB 618 because I believe the actions of the Governor and Health Director taken since March in response to the virus causing COVID-19 are an overreach of government power and HB 618 will help to fix and prevent that by reversing current health orders and requiring approval by the Ohio General Assembly for future ones. Back in March Ohioans were told to “stay home” for two weeks to “flatten the curve” and prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed with sick patients. This never happened and some hospitals became so empty because of Dr. Acton’s orders preventing certain surgeries and procedures being done that staff was laid off. This occurred where I work and I, along with others, was placed on unpaid leave of absence for a period of almost 3 months. The orders from Governor DeWine and the Director of Health, Amy Acton resulted in record unemployment and forced government closure of businesses lasted much longer than two weeks. At the time I wondered to myself how hurting the economy and forcing over a million Ohioans out of work could really be the *best response* that the government could come up with to what we were told was a very serious problem.

I am asking you to vote yes on House Bill 618 not because the Governor and the Health Director made mistakes, although I believe that mistakes were made, but because the role of Health Director was used in a manner it was never intended to be used and I hope the it will prevent the abuse of power which has occurred under both the Governor and Health Director by requiring approval by the General Assembly for health orders.

It is difficult to believe that the role of Director of Health was ever intended to have such power over the lives of Ohioans, to decide who is “essential” and who is “non-essential” as a worker and to decide whose healthcare is necessary and whose is not.

When Governor DeWine was sworn in, he swore to "discharge the duties of governor of Ohio" and to "support, protect and defend the constitution of the United States of America and the constitution of the State of Ohio". His duties as governor do not include keeping everyone from ever getting sick and restricting free movement of people and restricting access to work in that attempt. On August 25th Governor DeWine said that what he was sworn to do was to "protect the people of the state of Ohio" and "save lives". If the governor believes he was sworn to “save lives” why has he not banned smoking? Smoking significantly increases the risk of complications from respiratory viral infections. Obesity is one of the highest risk factors for

complications from the virus but fast-food restaurants remained open while gyms were closed. If this was all about saving as many lives as possible and it justified the restrictions, banning smoking and leaving gyms open would have had a more positive effect on the health of Ohioans than telling them not to go to work and to stay home. I am not for any of the restrictions because I do not believe in politicians micromanaging our lives but if the Governor and Director are going to go ahead with extreme measures, from a health perspective some of the decisions did not make sense. County fairs were cancelled while casinos were left open. Governor DeWine is micromanaging everyone's life and we did not sign up for this when we elected him.

House Bill 618 specifically states that the department will not be able to affect the conduct of an election and that is another reason I ask you to support it. The Health Director was able to interfere with the primary election and stop in person voting at the very last minute. I know people who did not get to vote because of the confusion that created.

I ask you to support House Bill 618. It will go into immediate effect and will protect Ohio workers and businesses immediately from further restrictions and shutdowns that may be in the plans again.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony.

Camie McCorkle