

November 16, 2020

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chariman Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the State and Local Government committee,

Thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony for HB 618. I am a Mom of three boys and stand in front of you today in support of HB 618 because I do not believe that, at any time, any one person or persons should ever be allowed to issue sweeping mandates or orders that would impact each and every Ohioan – whether it be their personal and/or professional lives, their child's education, etc. They should be required to provide evidence to support it, those in opposition should be allowed to provide their evidence and a fair debate should ensue within the General Assembly. That is why we have 3 branches of Government.

The ongoing, sweeping mandates and orders have impacted myself, my family and others like me emotionally, mentally and physically. These impacts will be with us for months, if not years to come. From feelings of hopelessness because we are told that if you do this, this and then this, this will happen. So you do all those things and then you're told it's not good enough (without true data and science to support it) so we are going to implement additional restrictions. Then you feel another weight on your shoulders and your heart because you now have to explain this to your children in a way they understand while still unable to wrap your own head around it. Then you feel abandoned because there is no clear person or entity that you can go to for help – there's no recourse if you feel this is wrong and no matter how loud you scream, you don't feel as though you're being heard. Then you begin to question why in the world this is happening and who do you go to? Who is going to listen? Who is going to stand up for you?

The toll this has taken on me mentally, emotionally and physically is unbearable at times. I have cried, screamed, felt angry and alone. I have lost weight, been unable to sleep most nights and then when I wake up in the morning I feel for a brief moment that it's a new day and then it hits me that the nightmare isn't over. I wonder what new orders our Governor will issue today what will again crush what little we and our children have left. I wonder what else can I do to help not only myself and my family but those out there who are just like me.

We need to move this bill forward so that not only is there a more reasonable, tailored response to this health concern but any future one. We also need to do it for every Ohioan's mental, emotional and physical well being.