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November 16, 2020 Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairman Stephens,
Ranking Member Kelly and members of the State and Local
Government Committee::

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in
support of House Bill 618.

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As a nurse, I feel I can provide a unique perspective on the
devastating impact of the unchecked powers of Governor DeWine
and ODH on our elderly population. As a hospice nurse, I have the
opportunity to care for residents of many of the long term care,
assisted living and independent living facilities across central Ohio,
and while it is true that Covid19 disproportionately affects the health of
this population, my experience has been that the response to Covid19
by ODH in these settings has negatively impacted and cost the lives of
far more people than the actual Covid19 illness. I have personally
witnessed previously stable patients come on to our service after
making statements that they would rather die than live a life of
complete isolation. I have watched as dementia patients who had
previously thrived due to the loving effort of their families suddenly
stop eating because their spouse or loved one was no longer allowed
to come in and feed them, as had been their routine, and shortly after
die of malnutrition. I have witnessed rampant abuse and neglect in

facilities who were no longer afraid of the unannounced family drop in, which had previously
helped keep them accountable for their care. Over and over again, families of previously
thriving individuals would tell me the same tragic story, "Dad was very active before Covid19;
he would go down and play bingo three time a week and would participate in the morning
exercise program. We would pick him up and take him to have coffee with his army buddies
once a month and he was overall happy and healthy. But this all changed with the lockdowns.
Dad was not allowed to leave his room, and all social activities were canceled. He could no
longer exercise or leave the facility, and we weren't allowed in to see him. Within weeks, dad
stopped walking with his walker and developed muscle atrophy. We had no idea how bad it
was because we weren't allowed in to see him. He simply lost the will to live." You may think
this is an exaggeration, but I assure you it is not. Over and over and over again, I have
personally cared for patients whose declines and deaths have been directly attributed to Ohio's
unscientific and unchecked response to Covid19.

On a more personal level, I would like to add that I have been incredibly saddened by the
widespread vitriol spearheaded by Governor DeWine's constant fear mongering as it relates to

Covid19. "Social distance and wear your mask" has become the mantra of a society who has now been conditioned to regard their fellow citizens, not as human beings, but as vectors of disease by a governor who makes statements such as, "When someone you don't live with enters your "bubble", it puts everyone you live with at risk." This rhetoric has, in my opinion, caused irreparable damage to Ohio's social fiber and has given a green light for those who agree with this rhetoric to publicly attack those who do not. I have spent a substantial amount of time researching the science behind universal masking and find it anemic, at best, and manipulative at worst. I have made the personal decision to avoid mask wearing for myself and my children based on all the science available prior to the politicization of Covid19, as well as my own experiences as a nurse with over a dozen years of experience. Because of this, I have personally been called names such as "Covid-Rat" and told that my children should be taken away from me simply for not wearing a mask in public. Just this week I was shopping at Meijer when a woman ran into me with her cart; I, believing the incident to be an accident and expecting her to apologize, turned towards her with a smile and said, "it's ok, no harm done!" Instead of an apology the woman sneered at me and said, "Where's your face mask?" Incidents like these are a direct result of an out of control governor who has been allowed to rule and reign as dictator of Ohio for the past 9 months.

Ohio can not afford to allow Governor DeWine and whichever ODH Director is currently at the helm to unilaterally make decisions that affect every facet of our individual lives any longer. It is time for the legislature to uphold their constitutional duty and reign in the power of ODH and the Governor by voting YES on HB618.

I will leave you with this quote, which I believe is more relevant today than any of us would like to admit.

"Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victim may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated, but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience." C.S Lewis

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Heather Groves