

11/15/20

To the Ohio House of Representatives:

RE: HB 618

“Belief and fact have nothing to do with each other,” from *Leave the World Behind* by Rumaan Alam. Governor DeWine has spent the last eight months manipulating Ohioans with fear and disregarding many known and relevant facts surrounding a virus that has a fatality rate of less than 1%. The Ohio Department of Health states that all other respiratory illnesses are down because of masking and social distancing, but not Covid. Somehow coronavirus is wily enough to get around all these “safety measures.” It must know how to read because all the mask packaging clearly states they don’t protect against coronavirus.

The governor believes we’re in the battle of our lives. And we are. Just not with a virus. The governor is waging psychological warfare on the people of Ohio with his despotic mandates. Refer to the Biderman Report of 1956 which details communist brainwashing techniques used on prisoners of war. It is almost entirely in step with the extreme covid response being pushed primarily by democratic governors, and republican DeWine. Ohioans have been financially devastated and mentally drained for the past eight months and are now entering the bleakest season with no reserves left for a new battle. Cold weather, little natural light and holiday anxiety will be compounded with continued isolation and threats of death attached to every human encounter. The science has not been politicized, it’s been hijacked entirely. A few days ago the governor commanded us to bring case numbers down in a week, or else! This is not science or leadership. It’s absurd and delusional.

In a September interview with WBNS 10TV, DeWine said he’s “not about to let the virus overrun the state again”. There is no again because it never happened in the first place. In March, a state of emergency was enacted in Ohio because of 3 positive covid cases. Many hospitals are still operating at reduced capacities, not overflowing. OHIO IS NOW TESTING TEN TIMES AS MANY PEOPLE AS IT WAS IN THE SPRING, UPWARDS OF 65,000 DAILY. PCR tests are not accurate for diagnosing asymptomatic patients (random testing of students). Case numbers don’t indicate active infections and deaths are not rising in tandem.

I work with the public and am fortunate to still have a job. Most of my daily interactions, limited as they are now, are with seniors. These are people who have lived through WWII and the polio outbreak. They frequently tell me that they do not need the government to take care of them or tell them how to live. Many of these people live alone and need to be out and about for socialization. They are fully capable of making their own decisions regarding the risks of carrying on with their lives. People who wish to do so may continue to shelter in place. We cannot hold an entire state hostage behind what we don’t know, and may not ever fully know, about this virus. We know enough to move forward safely, focusing resources to our hospitals and protecting the vulnerable. Consider offering extended FMLA coverage for workers with health concerns.

The stranglehold on Ohio must be released. Businesses are gasping for air and looking to the holiday season as their last hope. Another shutdown will be the last nail in Ohio’s coffin. Let’s make sure this never happens again. Please restore our constitutional rights with the passage of House Bill 618 and reopen Ohio NOW!

Thank you,

Joanne Penkalski

North Royalton, OH