

HB618 Proponent Testimony

Kendra Kabouchi

Constituent/Concerned Citizen

House State and Local Government Committee

November 16, 2020

My name is Kendra Kabouchi and I am writing to you as a concerned citizen, Ohio resident, and mother to two special needs children to express my support for H.B. 618. You will forgive me if I skip the regular pleasantries as I am writing this statement in between my child's meltdowns and my own tears.

I am a proponent of SB618 because my voice as constituent and citizen should matter but under the current ORC, it does not. Neither the governor nor health director have to officially hear my thoughts or opinions or the ways in which their decisions may impact myself and my children as stakeholders prior to enacting said orders/mandates. The resulting ramifications of these orders on my family have been nothing short of devastating. Many essential services such as homemaker personal care providers and respite care providers have been impossible to access and special provisions granted to mitigate the effects of these services being lost also impossible to access. All therapies and school support services lost. Progress that was many years in the making for my children in regards to their health and development has been effectively quashed. My daughter who had just begun to see leaps in her development prior to the shutdown has experienced severe regressions across the board. A child who once loved to color now cannot hold a writing utensil. A child whose communication skills had begun to blossom can now only cry out in incoherent frustration. These are only a few examples. These things might have been avoided had our voices had the opportunity to be heard which this bill will rectify as my elected legislator and this general assembly hears my voice.

Similarly, I am a proponent of SB618 because I believe that the governor does not have the authority nor should he exercise his authority to improperly interfere or postpone elections in such a manner that prevents my voice and the voices of my fellow Ohioans from being heard via our ballots. The right to vote and the right to be heard are sacred rights guaranteed by our state and federal constitutions and should be protected. What happened in March should never happen to Ohioans again and you have the power to change this.

I would also urge you to amend SB618 to include language which specifically defines "Enemy attack" as being one of human origin not pathogenic as our governor and previous health director have on many occasions spoken of Covid-19 pandemic as being a "War" and "enemy Invasion". As these individuals have clearly demonstrated, our words have a tremendous impact. It is up to you to decide whether the words in this bill will impact Ohioans positively or negatively.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony. I am unable to testify in person because of essential health appointments my children are scheduled for that conflict with the hearing date/time for this bill. If you have any further questions regarding my testimony I would be happy to answer them. I urge you to support HB 618.

Kendra Kabouchi

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