

November 17, 2020

Laurel Ljubi – Ohio Resident
H.B. 618 Proponent Testimony
House State and Local Government Committee
Room 116, with public access room 114

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

Thank you so much for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding House Bill 618. I urge all of you to support this piece of legislation that reigns in the Ohio Department of Health Director's apparent authority and implements checks and balances for any Ohio Department of Health order issued by requiring approval from Ohio's General Assembly. Our State Representatives and Senators are the chosen voice of Ohioans. For the past 9 months, I have personally felt that my voice has been silenced, despite my numerous calls, letters and emails to my State Representative, Senator, and our Governor.

During this pandemic we have seen the Director of the Ohio Department of Health close down "non-essential" businesses, limit hours of operations for restaurants/bars, close the voting polls for the Presidential Primary election in March, just hours before the citizen's of Ohio were to cast their votes, mandate masks be worn by everyone, including healthy Ohioans, and provide countless "guidelines" on how to live our everyday lives. I never thought an unelected official would have this much of an impact on my daily and personal life.

Each and every representative in this committee, our entire General Assembly, and even our Governor took an oath to uphold our nation's and state's constitution. Did you ever think you would be listening to a citizen beg to have their rights back? Did you ever once think you would be prohibited from sitting down and eating a meal at a restaurant? Or that the State would mandate a medical device/personal protective equipment or source control devices for every single Ohioan in order to shop, eat, work or recreate? Is this how you ever envisioned our state would be run? Do you believe these measures are constitutional?

Ohioans are suffering, yes from COVID-19, but also from mental health afflictions and financial burdens brought on by these infectious disease control measures by an unelected official with no input from Ohioans or our elected officials. You have the power and ability to change course, to impact every Ohioan by supporting HB 618 and get us back to our old normal. With the Governor threatening another shutdown or curfew, please, I implore you support HB 618. Thank you.