

November 16,2020

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

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony regarding HB618. I urge all of you to support this piece of legislation. I would like the Health Department to have less authority than this bill spells out. I believe in my heart that I am not alone in the conviction that the Health Department should not have the authority to tell healthy people to stay home and quarantine. I also do not think the constitution allows for one elected man and one non-elected official to deem what profession is essential or not. All Americans are essential, all people should be able to move freely and work to provide for themselves and their family. I am astonished at the overreach that has occurred since March. I am appalled that we saw an election cancelled and rescheduled. This can not happen again.

If I may introduce myself I am a mother, wife and nurse. I have spent the last eight years working with the developmentally disabled. It has truly been a pleasure to get to know these very special individuals. These draconian measures have negatively impacted this community. They had their day programs taken from them during this shut down. For many of them they are unable to articulate why their routine was disrupted. Why loved ones cannot come and visit- or when visiting their loved ones cannot touch them. I have a good friend who has a seven-year-old son with down syndrome and she is struggling immensely And I personally have a young son who has a hearing deficit and does not tolerate his hearing aid well.

For us, our world has become much smaller. We have medical mask exemptions from our doctor and yet are not able to return to the children's museum or to our local library just to name a few places. We also have not been able to attend his speech therapy in person since February. As of Monday we will not be permitted in most retail stores even with medical exemptions due to the fear that has been repeat at every single press conference, now with the looming threat of the Bureau of Workman's Comp shutting down businesses. You have to wonder what the climate would be like in Ohio if hope was offered at a press conference. If the media began to announce recovery rates and stopped announcing the death count.

The newest orders from Governor Mike Dewine have caused panic and fear to heighten. This is not based in science- it appears science has been thrown out the window and emotions are in the drivers seat. This is deeply concerning to me. When will we see accountability for the fear that has destroyed so many Ohioans lives? My own extended family has had many affected by these mandates. My own mother is out of work as the restaurant she has worked at for twenty-one years never reopened. She is struggling with financial hardship and depression.

Please reconsider having the local health department being limited in their power. Please ensure the people will not have more shutdowns or "soft marshal law" imposed on the people of Ohio. The people should be able to breathe freely. Please educate the public on hope. These measures are in place still for a virus that has a survival rate of 99.96%. A virus that has invoked policies that kill more than the actual virus itself. What is life if we spend it living in fear? We

the people of Ohio are ready to leave behind these unconstitutional mandates and have a totally free state. I believe as a health professional that the time is now to ensure the safety and health is left to the people of Ohio.

Sincerely,

Stacey Sigetic