

Chair Wiggam, Vice-Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly and the Honored Members of the House State and Local Government Reform Committee:

I have been a life-long Ohioan and always proud of my Midwest roots and values. For the most part, Ohioans are reasonable, grounded people with common sense. However, as we drift into 11 months of this "state of emergency" in Ohio, it appears that our leadership has wandered away from the original goals/reasons to instate the emergency and has gone completely myopic.

There are numerous personal examples on how the "state of emergency" I could give but will stay with one. My friend Cheryl had been her mom's caregiver for the past two years. Ruby (the mom) had had her physical issues, but with her daughter's amazing, attentive 24-care, Ruby was stable. On May 1, Ruby had a severe UTI and was transported to the hospital for IV antibiotics and a few days of care. Cheryl, who would always stay at the hospital 24-hours when her mom had been admitted in the past, was unable to see or even talk to Ruby. Instead, Cheryl had to rely on the 2x/day updates about her mom from a nurse. After several days, Cheryl was told her mom would likely be discharged soon, only to get a call later in the day telling her to come quickly as her mother had taken a bad turn. After nearly 8 days of not seeing or talking to her mom, Cheryl arrived to see Ruby in an emaciated state. You see, Cheryl was having to feed Ruby for several months, and it was certain that the under-staffed hospital likely couldn't have someone take the time sit and feed a patient. I'm NOT blaming the nurses. Instead, the system, starting with Governor DeWine's decisions that directly affected our hospitals, removed a vital part of the "team" for patient care and better outcome: The Family. Needless to say, my friend could only hold her now, non-communicative mom as she passed away. The cause of death was *not from or even with covid* as Ruby tested negative 3 times during her week in the hospital. Though Ruby's death is not "noted" in a daily count of those who died with/from covid, her death is still significant to those of us who love and miss her.

Fear seems to be what is leading government reaction and decision-making. (I can't imagine a general leading troops based on fear, but I digress.) In turn, we are experiencing gross and near-immoral judgements which is negatively affecting all Ohioans. If the lady who delivers the trays in a hospital can be vetted to be covid-free and healthy enough to work in an acute hospital setting, why can't that same vetting be done on a family member who can be at the bedside of a loved one? Again, the Governor's tunnel vision to "stop the virus at all cost" is creating unintended consequences all over Ohio, costing lives NOT succumbed to covid. Mine is just one, tragic story of many.

For this reason and dozens more I could cite, the Ohio Legislature needs to have more oversight ~ a better idea of the rationale for "checks and balances". Power in the hands of a few can be quite volatile. I urge you to **pass HB 90**.

Thank you for your time and attention,

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