

I am speaking today as a Connecticut resident, small business owner, and, most importantly, mom.

I am against the continuation of and codification of emergency powers for Governor Lamont. We have moved into an endemic phase of this virus and the power of public health needs to be put back in the hands of individuals. The need for government control can sometimes be justified in cases of overwhelming public health emergencies and that is simply not the case anymore. Emergency powers cannot be used for "potential" emergencies.

As our DPH commissioner stated, the data has a different meaning now. Case rates do not equal deaths and hospitalizations. We have vaccines and medications available to everyone age 5 and up to help prevent severe illness and death. We have to stop scaring the public with the idea that if you get Covid that you are a danger to society. It is quite simply an oxymoron to say that the vaccines work and continue these mitigation measures. If you feel the vaccines work then we should not be terrified to get Covid - which I'm sure will happen to everyone at some point. Further, as long as members of the school community are participating in virtually anything else locally - restaurants, concerts, etc there is no way to justify these measures in the schools and it is impossible to measure their effectiveness.

I'm a parent to elementary aged kids but also to a preschooler. I'm particularly disturbed by the continuing false narrative surrounding the extreme vulnerabilities of unvaccinated under 5s. It is well documented that the risks to kids of that age are negligible to the point of not even being statistically significant. This is why Europe doesn't even allow mask mandates for under 6s. We have the benefit of perspective because we have family in Spain and Ireland and their children 5 and under were never forced to mask even during surges. This is because the science says this is a disease targeting the vulnerable - not toddlers. These preschool years are formative for language and social/emotional development and these kids are at risk of still being in masks. I URGE you to keep the TRUE risk to these young kids in mind and that the office of early childhood education gives guidance that is commensurate to the true risk.

Finally I want to comment as a business owner in the hospitality industry who has suffered dramatic financial loss as a result of the continued rhetoric that, despite the availability of vaccines, that taking a vacation or going to a corporate meeting is a risk to my health and that of others. I have been tattled on at my child's school because I had to go on business trips and I've had many clients cancel programs because of the draconian measures put in place at their schools or the ridiculous testing requirements to come home. It's clear that this does nothing to stop the spread of Covid. Community discord is at an all-time high because of the lack of communication from the top that if you have natural immunity, vaccines, boosters, or are a young child, that your risk from Covid is minimal. Just yesterday members of our town were told that supporters of mask choice were ok with killing others. That rhetoric is unacceptable and comes from the false fear created from the top. Tell people the truth about the true risks, particularly for children

In closing this is about choice and about proportionality. I urge you to provide guidance that is proportional. Proportional to the TRUE risk involved and give individuals the choice to make their own decisions with that information.

Regards,
Amanda Doyle
Westport, CT