

## Written testimony for Continuation of Emergency Declarations and Limited Executive Orders

Dear Elected Officials,

My name is Amanda. I have two daughters, one in Kindergarten and the other is in 1st grade. They have never experienced a normal education environment EVER. For the past two years I have seen my children struggle as well as my husband who is a teacher for over 10 years.

Why is my oldest daughter and so many others struggling academically, socially, emotionally? If we go back to the start of the pandemic of March 2020. She was 4 years old and in preschool. Usually at that age they transition into more academics with integrated play. This was cut short and left a 4 year old doing zoom calls with their teacher while mom and dad were working. Teachers were just getting used to the technology and no matter how creative they got, having a 4 year old engaged the whole time was impossible.

Next came Kindergarten, the big girl school! She was excited except mom and dad couldn't come with her inside the school to explore the classroom together and put her at ease. It was a shock on top of the masks, social distancing and other covid measures. Then we had the sporadic virtual learning that came along with quarantining entire classrooms and children throughout the year.

One week they are in person and the next she is trying to learn letter sounds through a screen while the teacher (bless her heart) was masked teaching a classroom full of other students. Or when the entire classroom was quarantining and she couldn't find papers from that week's packet. Or she did not know what she was supposed to be doing because she couldn't hear the direction and they went into separated groups on the zoom call.

We actually all caught covid at that time and it spread through the house one by one leaving the kids quarantined for almost a month! Kindergarten is a critical time, they are learning the basics of everything and this is where she started to fall behind. I would personally try and work with her one on one throughout the summer but it just wasn't enough.

Now here we are in 1st grade, where COVID mitigations are affecting her 3rd year of schooling. She is truly struggling in class. Has issues in math and reading and specifically the sounds of letters still getting mixed up and she just guesses in hopes to get it right. She also has a reading specialist through the school who will come in and work with her one on one. BUT THEY ARE MASKED the entire time. How is she supposed to get past this hurdle when she is still at a disadvantage being masked?

She comes home from school with headaches because she is a bit shy and doesn't want to get in trouble. She gets very nervous to ask for mask breaks in the class. I have talked to her principal and teacher who are just wonderful but there is nothing they can do since the executive order has their hands tied. Perhaps if we didn't have the leash on our schools so tight we can work together with administration to get creative and figure out the best way to do things, on an individual basis for struggling children.

Her confidence with schooling is diminished, I try my best as her mother to build her up but then she goes back to school and cannot get there academically and it comes back down.

We are turning a blind eye to children like mine who need help and this top down approach does not allow for these kids to get the help they need and deserve. She desperately needs mask choice and a release of covid mitigations in our schools.

How have other countries like the UK and other states released this power and allowed normalcy again? How is it that CT has one of the highest Covid vaccination rates in the country yet we still have EOs that need to be made into law?

I think we have to take a close look at CT and dive deep on the data for children and COVID. How many children have gotten covid across CT? How many of those children have been hospitalized for a week or more with COVID? How many children in CT have adopted Long Covid? How long does Long Covid last in children? Have any children passed from Covid in CT?

Recently during the peak of Omicron in New York State, the risk of hospitalization for an unvaccinated child was less than 1/100,000. The risk to a vaccinated child is even less at 2-3 per million. **OUR CHILDREN NO MATTER THEIR VACCINE STATUS ARE NOT AT RISK!!**

What about the data from other countries and states that have never masked or implemented mitigation strategies in their schools and compare the data with ours. Is there a significant difference in severity when we compare?

Maybe we should also include mental health data in this conversation. We know Covid mitigation strategies across this country are to blame for the rise in mental health of individuals, especially in children. Does the data we see in CT for children that get COVID impose less risk than the risk/rise we see in mental health for children?

We have vaccines and boosters readily available for adults and children that need extra protection from severe symptoms or being hospitalized. We also have N95 masks to wear that gives enough protection for that individual, if they feel they are still vulnerable.

There is no need for a mask mandate, or blanket covid mitigation especially on our young children in a school environment.

I hope that many of you will stand up for the children like mine that are struggling. I hope you can support parents who advocate for their babies. Allow them to have a say and make decisions for the well-being and take the pressure off of local elected officials like yourselves and the schools.

Mask choice doesn't mean no masks at all. But allows an option for those children who are in need of this relief and choose to do so. Please vote NO for any extension of emergency powers and stop any emergency orders that do not allow parents to be a part of their children's health and well being at school.

Thank you for your time,  
Amanda Maurutis  
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