

Dear Leaders and Decision-Makers,

Please vote no to codify Governor Lamont's 11 Executive Orders, specifically the order focusing on school mask mandates. We are no longer in a state of emergency and the time is now to end any further extensions of Governor Lamont's Executive powers. For two years parents have accepted the phrase "kids are resilient." I am here to tell you many parents are no longer willing to tolerate hearing our kids are resilient. They are not. Many of them are breaking. Our kids are at the lowest risk, but yet continue to suffer and sacrifice the most. While life has returned to normal for most adults, the joy has been taken out of school. Schools are the only place in society where the ineffective, dehumanizing mitigation measures continue to be enforced. My first grader no longer enjoys school and consistently cries that he does not want to go. It is time to admit we are failing our children. Despite Governor Lamont's announcement that mask mandates might turn over to local decision makers, our message remains clear: we want parental choice in regards to masking students.

The data and science show we must start to put our children first. The advantages of wearing a cloth mask in preventing the spread of Covid are extremely small; however, wearing a mask is highly disruptive to learning. A recent study conducted by researchers at the Mayo Clinic, found that in villages in India where cloth masks were worn, infections were only reduced by only 5%. In the past few weeks, we have heard countless stories from parents about ways in which children are suffering. Facial expressions are no longer a part of our childrens' lives. A simple smile is being hidden. Physicians and epidemiologists also agree that we must acknowledge the cost-benefit of masking our children. We now know that Covid-19 is less of a threat to our children than the flu. The survival rate of children that get Covid-19 is 99.99% but the long term harm to our children could be staggering. On Monday medical analyst Dr. Leana Wen acknowledged that we must shift our focus on the children. She stated, "The responsibility should shift from a government mandate imposed from the state or local district of a school; rather, it

should shift to an individual responsibility by the family who can still decide that their child can wear a mask if needed. She went on to say, “The first restriction removed should actually be the restriction on children.” This should signal to all leaders the time is right now to end any further extension on mask mandates for our students in Connecticut.

Health authorities are able to advise us on the risks of contracting or getting seriously ill from COVID so we can make well-informed decisions. However, it is up to parents to weigh those risks compared to the social-emotional and educational impacts of mask measures. Parents are in the best place to make decisions in the best interest of their children’s entire well-being. Furthermore, everyone now has the appropriate tools to protect themselves so the decisions of one do not impact the safety of others. Mask mandates have not shown to make a significant impact on limiting the spread, but for many kids the effects have had serious negative effects. Let’s restore our individual freedoms and allow parents to make the best decisions for our children.

The data show the virus has become less severe, yet our Covid policies continue to be aggressive towards our children. The data and science show we must put our children first. Please admit we are betraying our children. Please remember we are asking for the choice to put our children in masks and not unnecessarily forcing children to do so to their developmental and emotional detriment. If any parent feels the need for their children to wear a mask, they should also be free to do so. We have had enough of our children being used as pawns in this political nightmare.

Best,  
Danielle McRedmond  
New Canaan, CT