

Dear Members of the CT General Assembly:

I am writing to request that you VOTE NO on the upcoming vote being taken to extend all and any of the COVID emergency executive orders previously issued by Governor Ned Lamont. Specifically, Executive Order 13A (mask mandates) should not be extended and should terminate. If all of the Executive Orders that are proposed to be extended (including Executive Order 13A) are bundled into one single vote, I request that you also VOTE NO on this matter. There is no longer an emergency pursuant to which these emergency executive powers should continue.

This letter is to request Governor Lamont and State Legislature's to end the mask mandates in schools. This should be a choice and optional.

End. Mask. Mandates.

You will not only lose voters by extending the EO, you will simply lose more residents fleeing the state.

Mask mandates are unconstitutional and illegal.

When we think of communication, we tend to think of speech. But so much of our communication is physical, broadcast through subtle bodily cues and facial expressions. A miniscule turning up of the lips to signal mischievous humor; a lift of the eyebrows to denote disapproval.

This much has been clear to scientists ever since Charles Darwin published The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals. In it, he identified six universal facial expressions used by virtually all humans across every country and time period. The process of reading and understanding these expressions is integral to the human experience, Darwin believed - and it is particularly important for a child's development.

Mask wearing is detrimental to the wellbeing and development of children and young people of all ages for multiple reasons. The most fascinating thing to a new born baby is a human face. In the very young, mask wearing hampers the ability to read emotions and learn to speak; in younger school children, it interrupts natural communication, as well as emotional literacy. In addition, in teenagers it reinforces social anxiety, has led to suicide increases, and quite a few teenagers, having spent two years looking at their own faces distorted on Zoom, now fear they are too ugly to remove them. "Oh, it's only a mask", "And the kids are resilient", say the mask advocates - but the ramifications of enforced mask wearing are going to be serious and long-lasting. And that is before we consider the health implications of having your airways covered for many hours per day, while you breathe in semi-recycled air, and the psychological effects of being viewed by society as a contaminant. Not many of those advocating masks in schools actually have to wear a mask all day.

Masks can interfere with young children's brain development. Numerous scientific papers have established that it can be harder to hear and understand speech and

identify facial expressions and emotions when people are wearing masks. See below link:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8595128/>

3 Physicians, also parents of school going children, noted a "disturbing" practice in school districts where school staff has fostered a toxic, punitive, mask culture.

Doron is Tufts Medical Center hospital epidemiologist and Tufts University School of Medicine associate professor. Branch-Elliman is an infectious diseases physician and Harvard Medical School associate professor. Perkins is the Boston Medical Center's director of emergency medicine – infectious disease management and emergency medicine associate professor.

Also stated-

"We urge public health and school officials to educate communities on one-way masking, emphasizing personal choice regarding self-protection and supporting those who choose to remain masked."

Many states and schools do not have mask mandates currently and do not have higher rates of infections and are operating normally. School districts in the state and nationwide are advocating for optional mask use. I speak for many in my community and state, even those who might just feel more comfortable right now to keep their own kids in a mask for the time being, advocate that it should be a choice and optional for all.

The silent majority is done, and we are speaking out. Enough.

Freedom to choose. Same goes for any vaccination mandate you are thinking about.

Thank you,  
Jennifer Banaletti

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