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February 4, 2022

Subject: Legislative Information Hearing: Continuation of Emergency Declarations and Limited Executive Orders - **VOTE NO**

Dear Members of the CT General Assembly:

I am writing to strongly 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 strongly request that you also **VOTE NO** on this matter. There is no longer an emergency pursuant to which these emergency executive powers should continue.

For two years, I have immersed myself in all data-backed research related to Covid and at this point in time I strongly believe that masking has infinitesimal to no impact on actually stopping the spread of Covid. I also have first hand experience on maskings effects on my children's social-emotional development and mental well-being. At 3.5 and almost 7 years old, they have lost two critical years of appropriate social emotional development. Facial cues and expressed emotions have been absent from their daily life with peers for far too long. For my younger daughter, watching mouths as sounds are made to learn appropriate speech patterns has been lost. And connecting facial expressions to emotions in peer group settings is non-existent and that is the single most important part of a toddlers first group socialization experience. My older daughter, who entered Kindergarten at Hurlbutt elementary (part of Weston Public Schools) in the middle of the school year, after we relocated from NYC, has never seen her classmates full faces in the classroom and socializing while masks are down (lunch, snack) is not allowed. She has developed anxiety and behavioral issues from lack of normal peer to peer socialization, partially from not being able to see and accurately decipher facial cues.

Our children have paid dearly, all in the name of saving adults which now seems grotesque after having hindsight on the actual risk for healthy adults, and even mortality rates over-all. However, in the spirit of moving forward, we now know too much to remain paralyzed from ill-informed and irrational fear. When you know better, you do better. So let's do better for our kids and give back parents their right to decide what is best for their children and families, based on their knowledge of their own health histories and risk/benefit analysis specific to their situation. And let's please start using fulsome and accurate data to make decisions; relying on inaccurate headlines and faulty reporting only results in creating a fear-based culture. We are so much better than that.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Glaisek Ferguson

