

re: Informational Hearing on the Continuation of Emergency Declarations and Limited Executive Orders

This is Kate Aurora writing, Mom to two boys aged 11 (6th grader) and 7 (1st grader). While a divisive and unpopular topic, I am bringing up our ongoing and very serious concerns with mandatory masks at school. Both boys have a genetic moderate to severe hearing loss. Along with hearing aids, both boys are very fluent lip readers. Although my husband and I are normal hearing, we struggle to hear and understand people in masks - so you can imagine how difficult masking is for the hearing impaired. Not only do the masks muffle the sounds, they also completely negate the lip reading. And the tighter the mask (think N-95) the more muffled the remaining sound is.

These ongoing restrictions are not without damage and consequences. Even the most pro-mask adherents (who are most welcome to mask indefinitely) must now admit that the "risks" to children are almost very nil, and they are not spreaders, either. Should we stop sending our kids to swim, ride a bike, or go for a car ride? Should Governor Lamont mandate helmets in the shower? These activities all have a far higher risk of harm than COVID for children. Where is the discussion of trade-offs, or costs versus benefits? Most children are neither in grave danger nor do they pose a grave danger to others—especially now that vaccines are widely, freely available. We are sacrificing one generation for the dubious and unproven theory of protecting another. Masking is not just an uncomfortable inconvenience for my family, it prevents and hinders learning, communication, peer relationships, and listening for my boys. I ask, and even implore, you to find the courage to do the right thing and say NO MORE.

Thank you,
Kate Aurora
Cos Cob, CT