Members of the Legislature,

I am an extremely concerned mother of four young children ages 2, 5, 7 and 9. For nearly two years, my children have been forced to wear masks. It is 2022, we know a LOT more about this virus than we did in 2020, and therefore, it is time to end the mandate.

Masks are damaging my children socially, emotionally, academically, and physically. **Socially,** masks inhibit their ability to read facial cues from their friends and teachers. My children have had very few playdates over the last two years because some families are overly cautious and fearful and want masked playdates.   **Emotionally**, my children have been taught to view their own breath as dangerous to themselves and others. This is incredibly damaging psychologically. **Academically**, my children have suffered because they can't hear their teacher properly, and they do not like going to school in masks. They have lost their love of school and learning during this pandemic. **Physically**, my son started experiencing facial tics as soon as he went back to school in a mask. My son has frequent rashes and dry skin along his mouth and nose where the mask irritates him all day. So many children are suffering as a result of these masks.

We know that the survival rate for children is 99.98%. We know that cloth masks do not stop the spread of the virus. We know that one-way, high-quality masking works. Why do we continue to impose restrictions on the group with the least amount of risk? Is it to protect fearful teachers? Teachers who have already had an opportunity to be vaccinated, boosted, and can wear an N95 if they choose? It is time to PUT THE CHILDREN FIRST and end the mask mandate. Our kids have ONE childhood. Parents know their children best, and deserve the right to mask, or unmask, their children if they wish.

Regards,

Kelly Sadick