

Dear State Legislature,

I am very concerned about the upcoming vote to "codify" all eleven remaining executive orders in one fell swoop, specifically the mask mandate in schools, and I encourage you to vote "no". I don't have children of my own but have spent 12 years of my career in a public school setting in various capacities. I am a neurotypical adult whose brain is done developing. I am used to challenging situations, am able to keep my cool, pivot on a dime and don't give up easily, but the masks caused me so much distress that I had to take a leave of absence from work. It is an ongoing nightmare, and the possibility that it could become "law" makes me sick to my stomach.

Imagine how much worse it must be for the children! Over the past year and a half I have dealt with situations and heard many horror stories regarding the forced masking of children; I have seen the insides of masks routinely coated in mucus, blood or dirt. Children have suffered from staph infections on their faces, pleurisy, sore throats, bloody noses, increased irritability, anxiety, the list goes on and on. We now have children who are so afraid of catching a virus that rarely affects them severely that they are afraid to take their masks off even to eat lunch. Do you think that is okay? I could write a whole page on the effects these masks are having on the children's socio-emotional development and language acquisition, but for the sake of time I won't. How anyone thinks this requirement is healthy or protecting anyone, or that it should be continued indefinitely is beyond me. We are so tired of hearing that children are resilient. They are, but they shouldn't have to be. They can get used to any number of unhealthy routines. That doesn't mean they aren't causing long term harm.

In closing, it is your moral duty to vote "NO". All of the other executive orders need to be voted on individually, but the decision on masks needs to be an individual decision. Every day more and more states are dropping blanket school mandates: first Pennsylvania, then Illinois, now New Jersey. Connecticut needs to be next. Thank-you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Kristen Berggren 02/07/2022