

Hi. My name is Steviann Martines. I am mom of three boys in Greenwich Public Schools and a nonprofit professional focused on the growth of local organizations in Fairfield county, currently as a grant maker. I want to thank you for keeping our schools open and I have two quick points.

Regarding Covid we are no longer in a state of emergency and there is no reason why Lamont should maintain his executive orders or to codify into law any mitigation strategies for Covid that take away people's individual choices. How we handle this virus at this point should not be by force but rather should be an individual choice. We need to shift our focus to the current emergency in our state which is the consequence of the mitigation strategies that have been forced on our children. The organizations I work with all serve residents throughout CT and are addressing the true, current emergency - the significant increase in mental health issues, the detrimental academic loss, the astounding number of developmental delays, and of course a lack of funding to handle the tremendous increase in demand for their services.

The inequality in our state is profound and the pandemic and these mitigation strategies have only made it so much worse. So to kick this decision to the school boards rather than making it a parental choice is unfair and unjust. It will only increase the divide this state is already known for. The sooner we move on, the sooner we start to repair and address the damage that had been done over the last two years. We need to move on from masks, from social distancing in school, from plexiglass dividers and get back to normal for our children who have sacrificed the most and are least at risk from death and hospitalization due to Covid.

Secondly, we had tens of thousands of families move to CT in the past two years - escaping the city. This is great for CT's economy. BUT all I've heard from people around town who moved here is regret - they feel they just moved out of the fire into the frying pan as we continue to have our freedoms taken away. People who have grown up here or moved here years ago to raise their families and love this state are moving in swarms to other parts of the country where they honor our freedoms as individuals and as parents. Those of us who they haven't already moved are staying to fight the fight while dreaming of this better life of American freedom and wondering if they can still have that here the way they had planned. The more time that goes by the more families we lose, tax paying good citizens who have made this state the place that made people want to move here in the first place. We can't afford to delay or to extend or to continue the way we've been living. There is too much at stake. Let's give freedom back to the people of CT.

Thank you,
Steviann Martines

"Breathing in a mask makes me sick. I once had a cold and I felt worse because of the masks."
Michael, 1st grade