

Dear Members of the CT General Assembly,

2-7-22

I am writing to 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 mandate) should not be extended and should terminate. If all of the executive orders are bundled into a single vote, I request you also VOTE NO. There is no longer an emergency in which these orders should continue.

I come forward as an experienced educator of 14 years with a Master's in middle level education as well as a parent of four children. Needless to say, I have a solid understanding of the social-emotional impact this last two years has had on children.

I have heard the term "resilient" tossed around like a badge of honor when it comes to children and the adult expectations that have been placed on them throughout this pandemic. In reality, the term resilient permits adults to dismiss the social and emotional needs of children. This is grossly irresponsible behavior and places a tremendous burden on our youngest citizens.

In the classroom, disengagement, fear, and lack of connection are all problems that have come straight out of trying to solve the problem of "pandemic safety" through mitigation strategies such as mask wearing. Teachers and administrators are reporting to parents that many children are struggling academically, socially, emotionally and mentally. In Brookfield, the interim high school principal recognized the significant challenges children are facing and sought school outreach support. Sadly, he resigned prior to being able to see this through. I think we can agree, these last two years have posed a challenge for children to connect for many reasons. From kids on zoom, to masks all day, to teachers and principals policing mask wearing, to lack of in person extracurricular activities and so on. What makes a school community a unique and vibrant environment is lost.

Continuing to enforce mitigation strategies that have so clearly done more harm than good is disappointing at best and completely irresponsible at worst. Our kids deserve better.

I implore you to consider the negative social-emotional impact the current mask requirement has on students and please represent our children who are counting on you to give them an opportunity to learn in a friendly environment where their academic needs are met with support for their social and emotional well being. Please VOTE NO for masking in schools.

Thank you,
Tanya Stanley
Brookfield, CT