February 7, 2022

Re: Legislative Information Hearing: Continuation of Emergency Declarations and Limited Executive Orders

To Whom It May Concern,

I am hoping that the state legislature will look at the progress that Connecticut has made over the last two years, and notably in the last several months when considering the mandates and public health guidelines currently under review.

I believe that Connecticut has led the nation in both following the science and keeping our citizens safe and our children (mostly) in school. It is now time for the legislature to acknowledge the progress we have made. Nearly 92% of our population has at least one dose of a vaccine and 76% are fully vaccinated. Our hospital capacity is under 75% with less than 13% of ICU beds being used for COVID-19 patients. Our positivity rate in the broader population has crashed following the Omicron rise.

Our public health measures need to align with the gains that our population has made to control COVID. Our hospitals are no longer in crisis – they are not projected to be in crisis. We need metric-driven policies. The Governor and CTDPH have never communicated an off-ramp for the COVID mitigations under review.

At what point is our vaccination rate "enough"? At what level do we consider our hospitals not in "crisis"? When do we stop quarantining healthy children?

If you cannot explain the conditions under which a public health policy will end, then we should not continue to enact restrictions.

The public needs to understand at what level of COVID prevalence do we allow our children and the parents of those children to return to a normal school day and rely on childcare again. We need to return to a policy where sick children and adults stay home and healthy children and adults can attend school and work.

I believe our children are resilient – but let us understand that resilience is an acknowledgement of harm. They no longer need to be resilient – let's give them back some normalcy.

Regards,

Tara Vakil
Glastonbury, Connecticut