



**Testimony of  
Sherri Dayton  
President, Backus Federation of Nurses**

**Informational Hearing  
Continuation of Emergency Declarations and Limited Executive Orders  
February 8, 2022**

My name is Sherri Dayton, I am the President of the Backus Federation of Nurses and an emergency department registered nurse in Connecticut. I ask you to continue the mask mandates in schools. This is not just a school issue; it is a public health issue. Children under five cannot be vaccinated, and children five and up are the least vaccinated population in the state. This makes them high risk for contracting and spreading COVID. After the vaccine, wearing a mask is one of our best defenses against this virus that has killed over 10,000 Connecticut residents. It is well known in the science community that masks work best when everyone is wearing one, and their effectiveness decrease as the number of people wearing them in an indoor setting decrease.

As a healthcare professional, I can testify firsthand to the degree of exhaustion felt in the healthcare field due to wave after wave of COVID. The latest Omicron wave was the worst in the hospital I work for, and we need a break. Unmasking school-age children will very likely bring on wave five. I understand that there will be a time when the mask comes off, and I am looking forward to that day. If we were at a 6-8 % positivity rate a year or two ago, and this came before you, I do not believe we would consider removing the mandate. I ask that mask removal be tied to a scientific health measure and not just political pressure from the vocal minority. Peoples' lives depend on it. The stability of our health care system depends on it. Your decision on this issue will also affect the desire to serve by teachers, all school workers, and healthcare professionals. We need your support. Thank you for your time.

Sherri Dayton RN, BSN, CEN.