

Thank you for taking the time to listen to the public today. As you know many educators are in school right now. I worked online to collect ideas and thoughts from them in a collaborative document. I'm reading this testimony that was created together with my colleagues.

Elected Leaders,

I will remind you that CT municipalities were left to make their own decisions regarding masks and CT saw a 162% increase in cases, along with severe spikes in both deaths and ICU admittance. Leadership says to "follow the research" and "follow the science"—well, the pilot study with municipalities failed, BIGLY.

School ventilation systems are not up to code and there is no way the schools will be able to support proper social distancing on a consistent basis. We know this already. Teachers know this. You asked. They told you. Masks are needed to mitigate risk.

I empathize with the students who live in multi-generational households, who are constantly worried about bringing Covid home and killing the people that they care about the most—or maybe even the only person who ever gave a damn about them in their whole life. The fact that leadership has decided that those people don't matter is insane to me, because they are many times the same people who refuse to give those same students the resources and support that they need to thrive. Are you that leader? I hope not.

This is a class issue. This is a race issue. This is a gender issue. It's no secret that women are the majority of teachers, while out of 166 boards of education, at last count, only about 44 superintendents were women, and about 5 were minorities. Tell me again how those in power really represent educators?

As our elected leaders you have a responsibility. Not to CBIA—but to people—the most vulnerable people in our community. This isn't about consensus or what the majority wants. Being "good boys and girls" doesn't win us privileges against a virus either. The virus could care less if you wore your mask last June and washed your hands yesterday. It wants to kill you today.

Like Civil Rights, Disability laws, and environmental protection, this is about protecting the most vulnerable from catastrophic loss. It's not about money. You are not elected by money. You are elected by people. Protect people from other people—or just give it up already.

I'm no Lamont fan, but if you end the executive orders, you are signing death sentences for the most vulnerable in our community—the immunocompromised. And if masks are eliminated in schools, you are making students themselves assassins in their own communities and families.

Have the political will to do the right thing and err on the side of caution. I can tell you from personal experience, doing the right thing is not the easy thing. Nothing worth doing ever is, right? As JFK said, "We do these things not because they are easy, but because they are

hard.” You are elected to do the hard things. So, please, have the political will to continue Gov. Lamont’s executive powers and make sure masks continue protecting everyone in schools.