

March 30, 2021

RE: Testimony In Favor of HB 1323

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Jami Littlefield and I reside in West Fargo, ND. I am writing you to encourage a **DO PASS vote on HB 1323**, relating to limitations on mask wearing requirements. There are a multitude of reasons why a state or local elected official, the state, or a political subdivision of the state should not have the ability to mandate an individual of this state use a face mask, face shield, or other face covering.

When an elected official mandates the use of face coverings, they are imploring the individuals of their state to wear face coverings to prevent those individuals or others from becoming ill. They are creating a treatment plan for the individuals of this state and insinuating that “if you wear this mask you and others are protected from virus and transmission”. Implementing these mandates means those officials are accepting responsibility for the health of the individuals in this state. I strongly believe protecting ones health should fall solely on that individual and their healthcare provider; not any level of government. As someone who works in a health care facility that strives for individualized and comprehensive care I find it to be harmful and negligent to mandate a “one size fits all” treatment plan for the residents of this state. Elected officials can take guidance from the Department of Health but the message remains the same; the public is being told that a face covering will protect them and others from getting sick.

The effectiveness of masks in stopping virus transmission is heavily debated which puts even more weight on the fact that this type of mandate must not be placed on the public. Even the CDC has wavered on the effectiveness of masks for fighting virus transmission. In a March 26, 2021 post the CDC gave ways to improve how your mask protects you. The CDC states you should choose a mask with a nose wire, use a mask fitter or brace, check that the mask fits snugly over your nose, mouth, and chin, and add layers of material. If elected officials are going to be allowed to make a decision that a mask will protect the public from contracting and spreading a virus then those elected officials should have a system in place to inspect the masks of all individuals to prove that those individuals are in fact protected! If a system like this is not in place then it is reasonable to assume that the masks being worn are simply for the appearance of safety and not ensuring safety!

As I stated previously, the CDC stated ways to make your mask more protective. They state that masks should fit snugly against your face and that you should pick a mask with layers to prevent respiratory droplets from getting IN and OUT! This shows that the CDC themselves understand that a virus can get

in and out of your mask. If the public must take all these extra measures to ensure protection with mask use then is it not reasonable to assume a majority of the masks people are wearing are ineffective at preventing virus transmission? Why are we mandating something that doesn't work? Is it simply to give people a tool to "feel" safe going out in public regardless of effectiveness? Would it not make more sense to simply allow those individuals who are fearful to obtain effective masks for self protection (N95, KN95) versus a population of people complying with mandates using ineffective face coverings while promoting the idea that they are safe?

Most people do not maintain a sanitary mask – it hangs in their cars, in their pockets, in their backpacks and is worn multiple times without washing, to multiple locations, and around multiple people. They touch and adjust it, then rub their eyes, and touch their noses etc. Are we really stopping the spread of virus or are we creating the perfect breeding ground for spread? I would argue that people are less hygienic wearing masks because they think they are protected from virus by placing a piece of cloth over their faces. The reason they think this is because their elected officials have told them to wear a mask to protect themselves and others from virus transmission.

I would also like to site a recent KFVR article regarding the loosening of Mask Mandates in the ND Capitol. *"Due to the different branches of government controlling different wings of the building, some rooms and hallways have a mask mandate and others don't"*. If the elected officials of this state cannot come to an agreement on mask mandates why would this type of a mandate ever be allowed to be placed on the residents of this state? If you look around the capitol and see some elected officials wearing masks and others not, why would you allow this type of mandate to be placed on the residents of this state? Why would you allow a mandate to be placed on the residents of your state that you as elected officials do not consistently follow yourselves? These mandates are an infringement on our rights and freedoms as Americans! It is your responsibility to ensure North Dakota values freedom over fear!

In conclusion, I would ask that you have an open minded thought process when reviewing all the information relating to this bill and really ask yourself if a state or local elected official, the state, or a political subdivision should have the power to force its residents to cover their faces. I strongly, strongly urge you to vote **DO PASS on HB 1323**.

Sincerely,

Jami Littlefield
West Fargo, ND 58078