

Chairman Klemin and Members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

My name is Melyssa Howry and I live in District 4. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB1323.

The government overreach that we have seen over the past year has been unprecedented, at least in our lifetimes. I never thought I would see a time like this in the United States. Masks have become “the norm” for most people, and yet the effectiveness of the practice has never been based firmly in science. Here is a link to a review of many studies on masks, both with favorable and unfavorable results. I ask you to please take even just a quick look at the summaries of these studies:

https://swprs.org/face-masks-evidence/?fbclid=IwAR2svXZvyZEE83tqSXeDnyLr56TlyJwK5W_6WObRtFtMPgbS-jiUPO48MO4

I could attach study after study to back up my strong conviction that masks are unnecessary, ineffective, and potentially dangerous, especially for children (please see just one VERY important data study on the negative effects masks are having on children:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348254027_Corona_children_studies_Co-Ki_First_results_of_a_Germany-wide_registry_on_mouth_and_nose_covering_mask_in_children).

However, I am sure that for every study I could produce, the opposition could produce one that seeks to prove otherwise. So we find ourselves at a standstill, in the midst of a very controversial debate, where both sides can produce evidence that seems to support their position on masks.

This is exactly why I support this bill. A practice that has not been proven to be scientifically effective should never be forced upon citizens by the government, or by anyone in authority, whether that be a business owner, hospital, school district or any other employer. There just isn't enough conclusive evidence one way or another to warrant such drastic measures. This should be a choice. It never should have been forced upon anyone against their will, especially in North Dakota, where personal liberty is held in high regard.

I recognize two problems here. One is that those who believe masks work believe that everyone must use them in order for them to be effective. By default, there is oppression, bullying, and even hatred directed towards people who do not agree with that belief. The second problem is that by putting mandates in place at the state or local level, it then becomes the job of local law enforcement to uphold such mandates and to determine what method of enforcement is warranted. This puts unnecessary pressure on those who are protecting and serving, because they should not be expected to penalize law-abiding citizens who choose not to wear masks. It is inappropriate to place that responsibility on their shoulders. I also see a lot of citizens who have taken it upon themselves to be “mask police” due to these mandates. This does nothing except to create more division, hatred, and frustration during a time when we as human beings have already been faced with enough hardship.

To conclude, this is a time when we should be on the same team, not fighting against one another. Mask mandates only increase the divide, as they cause people to make judgments about each other simply by looking at them. I believe this is wrong, and should never have happened in the first place. We can stop this here in North Dakota, and send a message to the rest of the nation that we will not allow our citizens to be bullied and mistreated simply because they have a different opinion than the dominant narrative.

For these reasons, I fully support HB1323 and ask that you move it forward with a "DO PASS" recommendation. Thank you for your time.