

Dear Committee Members,

Asymptomatic spread of COVID-19 is the house of cards upon which mask mandates and lockdowns are built. A Journal of the American Medical Association meta-analysis of 54 studies showed that the rate of asymptomatic spread in households that had a family member who was positive for COVID-19 was 0.7%. If it is that rare among family members that live together, what does that tell us about asymptomatic spread in the general population? The link to the JAMA Network Analysis published on December 14th, 2020 is provided below.

The burden of proof lies with our governing authorities and businesses to provide solid evidence and constitutional support for enacting policies that change people's lives in such dramatic ways as forced public mask-wearing at all times. In fact, an argument could be made that the public deserves proof that masks don't actually *cause* the spread of viruses and bacteria. Many citizens have legitimate health concerns about the unprofessional way masks are being worn in non-clinic settings. Because the evidence is so mixed and politicized, and because we are inexplicably told to wear masks even when socially distanced from others, many citizens do not have confidence in public health messaging.

The evidence for the efficacy of public mask wearing has actually been quite weak which is why those who advocate for masks and lockdowns resort to emotional manipulation to get the public to comply with mask mandates. Blaming fellow citizens for the completely inevitable spread of a highly contagious respiratory virus has led to unintended negative social consequences including the pervasive bullying and lecturing of fellow citizens as well as the argument that we should normalize mask-wearing from this point forward to protect the population from all viruses, not just COVID-19. We are being asked to choose compassion for others over individual liberty, but that is a false dichotomy, and serves only to cause animosity and division among fellow Americans.

Mask mandates are a win-win for political leaders and corporations. If cases decline, they can credit their decisive leadership. If cases rise, they can blame the public for non-compliance. Either way, the burden of responsibility is placed on the public and conveniently lets leaders off the hook for failures in policy. Attached below are graphs of states and countries that show that the rise and fall in COVID-19 cases are completely unaffected by government mitigations.

Going forward, elected officials and business owners have the choice to continue leading through force or to lead by persuasion, reason and dialogue. I

ask you to consider which of those two styles of leadership reflect the hard won liberty that North Dakotans highly revere. Please respect your fellow citizens enough to allow them to assess public health guidelines and then decide for themselves whether to mask up or not. If the case for mask-wearing holds up, then most North Dakotans will choose to comply because we have always been the kind of people who look out for one another. However, the freedom to choose is the only way forward if we have any respect left for the freedom for which so many fought and died.

Please render a DO PASS on HB 1323.

Thank you for your leadership and service to our great state.

Resources:

Mask Graphs

<https://rationalground.com/after-nine-months-we-still-know-masks-dont-work/>

<https://rationalground.com/more-mask-charts/>

<https://rationalground.com/mask-charts/>

JAMA Network Analysis

[https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2774102?](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2774102?fbclid=IwAR2oEkC4hwEgiNiMuH1QgbU3Cddleb_sWsdUUa0EMpGoMZ9eqzFQjhnZgoM)

[fbclid=IwAR2oEkC4hwEgiNiMuH1QgbU3Cddleb_sWsdUUa0EMpGoMZ9eqzFQjhnZgoM](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2774102?fbclid=IwAR2oEkC4hwEgiNiMuH1QgbU3Cddleb_sWsdUUa0EMpGoMZ9eqzFQjhnZgoM)