From: Heather Schulte
To: Public Testimony
Subject: Keep the masks!
Date: Thursday, August 19, 2021 7:48:57 AM

To whom it may concern:

I would like to express my deep concern about any future plans to lift the mask mandate in school. As a healthcare worker (RN) and a young 35 year old that has had Covid and continue to experience ongoing Long Haul symptoms 15 months after initial infection, i strongly urge you to keep our children safe from this deadly, debilitating virus. My youngest has the same ongoing symptoms as I do, I am terrified for her health and what chronic conditions we may be facing. I worry about her heart health when her heart starts beating out of her chest with any play. These are going to be the worries of many parents if their child contracts Covid. If they are lucky enough to get over the virus without it being fatal to them, they could still be left with long lasting debilating symptoms that can change their whole life. We already know that children can also pass this virus to others in their household, such as parents and grandparents, that may not be so fortunate.

Our hospitals are overwhelmed and full. I'm seeing the compassion of the doctors and nurses struggle due to the yo-yo effort our community has done to try to move on from Covid and return to normal life. We all want that. It's not ready for us to do that yet. Just this week my hospital lost a 23 and 24 year old woman to Covid. It's here and it's not going anywhere until we mitigate the spread. Masks work, very well. Masks protect. It's easier for kids to look around and see their fellow peers also in masks, rather than singling out any kids who are doing their best to protect their life. I was so disappointed in the schools for lifting the mask mandate 2 weeks prior to the end of the school year last year. Why?? It didn't even go along with the CDC recommendations that vaccinated people could remove their masks around other vaccinated people. KIDS AREN'T VACCINATED and elementary kids aren't eligible to be vaccinated. So how did that even get approved?!? Not to mention then my kids turned into the minority when they continued to wear their masks and they were one of very few left in a masks. You don't think that's not more damaging to their mental health, being the only one in a mask to protect themselves and their family, and none of their friends are.
Lifting mask mandates at any time soon would be detrimental and could cause a lot of lives to be lost, children included. It is no shock that we ended up here again with how crazy everyone went when the mask mandates were lifted and the unvaccinated did what they wanted too. Just as you are told to not stop an antibiotic when things start to get better, or it will lead to more opportunistic infection , and to finish the full course. Of course this was going to happen. It won't stop until we are back in masks, and get more people vaccinated. We are headed into flu season. We had virtually NO FLU last fall with masks. Flu is spread so easily around classrooms. Masks work! Please don't put our children's lives at risk by making a decision you will regret by not listening to the healthcare workers begging people to stay in their masks.
I would be happy to discuss this further if you would like as well.

Heather Schulte-Registered Nurse, Concerned Mother, Long Haul Covid Survivor