

**Maryland House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Chairwoman / Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

SUPPORT for MD 2021 HB 017 Emergency Powers Limitations (Consent of the Governed Act).

Hello, Chairwoman / Delegate Pendergrass and the Maryland House Health and Government Operations Committee:

I am writing today asking for a favorable report for **MD 2021 HB 017 Emergency Powers Limitations (Consent of the Governed Act).**

I believe in keeping people healthy and safe, and while I believe the Covid 19 crisis is real and my heart goes out to those in our state who tested positive for the virus, and those who have passed from the virus.

However I also believe in checks and balances of Government as well. In March of 2020 when our Governor implemented emergency powers for the Covid 19 crisis , he did this with little to no input from the State Legislature, something I find very concerning as someone who believes in rights, freedoms, the rule of law, and our Constitution.

I believe the purpose of limiting existing emergency powers of the Governor and allowing for meaningful General Assembly advice and consent.

While I believe the Governor's actions last year on Covid restrictions had good intentions. The Covid restrictions the Governor implemented has had a negative impact on many elements in our State.

Personal examples are my three children have been doing remote learning for almost a full year. They have all experienced mental health problems as a result of this. One child has anxiety and depression, another has started therapy, and the third is currently in a partial hospitalization program. In addition to being less active, my children are suffering socially and not developing as they should. At my work we had to furlough 50% of our employees, reduce hours of operation, have 50% less revenue, and 90% less customers. These orders are infringing on our rights that are guaranteed in the constitution. Overdoses, Suicide, Divorce have all increased. Our Rights, Freedoms, physical health have declined.

Again while I believe in keeping people safe, and healthy. I also believe in checks and balances in our Government, rights, freedoms, the rule of law, and the Constitution.

I believe that this proposed legislation protects these principles, and will add balance to scales of power in our State.

I ask the committee for a favorable report on **MD 2021 HB 017 Emergency Powers Limitations (Consent of the Governed Act)**

Thank you,

Heather O'Brien