

HB 17 – Letter of SUPPORT

Alexandra Rak

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Dear Health and Government Operations Committee,

I write today in SUPPORT of HB 17 – “Consent of the Governed Act”. I have led the “Reopen Charles County” contingency of 1400+ citizens since May 14, 2020. I have spoken with dozens of business owners, hundreds of parents of school aged children, and thousands of citizens who have endured a significant loss of their social, emotional, and financial well-being since March of last year. The root cause of all this suffering is not the actual disease of COVID-19, but instead the unending and unendable state of emergency declared by the Governor, who refuses to cede any of his unilateral power over our lives.

No single person is supposed to have as much power as Governor Larry Hogan has wielded this past year. The country’s framers never intended for an individual to be so important in the lives of citizens and the state of Maryland’s constitution is far more vocal about what should happen with a government that no longer works for the people. The General Assembly and our local level governments are supposed to be the people’s line of defense against a renegade executive or activist courts. Your ability to assist us after the early close of the legislative session in 2020 was negated, leaving the people with no voice and powerless against the ravages that would sweep through our once great communities.

An emergency cannot last for a year or more. This “battle” against a virus has become a war on the people. At the local level, Reopen Charles County successfully lobbied *against* every single attempt at our Board of Commissioners to tighten restrictions on the citizens or businesses in our county. That is because our ability to influence our elected representatives is greatest at the lowest level possible. For this reason, we should always have decisions such as the public health response needed for COVID-19 made by the lowest level of society – chiefly the individual him- or herself, then local municipal and county legislators. To allow the Governor sole authority over the pandemic response has simply devastated our communities. The General Assembly has allowed the Governor unchecked power that they are in danger of never being able to regain.

To say that our community has been devastated is an understatement. Words cannot describe the levels of anxiety, antipathy, and antisocial behavior that are growing in our youth. Every day in my group of 1400+ Charles County citizens, parents plead with the school board to reopen schools. Business owners detail the harassment of local county health boards coupled with decrease in consumer confidence that is crushing their livelihoods. Houses of Worship are closing as people lose faith in every institution they have ever held dear. The full ramifications of imposing untested “lockdowns” on a formerly free society will not be fully felt for years to come. I pray you act before we pass the point of no return.

With this letter, please take into consideration my personal support as well as the support of 1400+ Marylanders who wish for this situation to never again happen in our great state. I urge you to give HB17 a favorable report and urge for its passage in the House of Delegates.

Respectfully,

Alexandra Rak