

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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IN RE: MASKING IN SCHOOLS

RHODE ISLAND CODE OF REGULATIONS NO. 216-30-30-4

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Date: Friday, March 15, 2024
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Place: Administration Building
One Capitol Hill
Conference Room A

PRESENT:

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JAMIE COMELLA
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1 FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2024

2 (PUBLIC HEARING COMMENCED AT 9:05 A.M.)

3 MR. GARCEAU: All right. If I could just
4 have everybody's attention, we are going to begin
5 the hearing now. And, welcome, everybody. We are
6 here today to conduct a public hearing concerning
7 the rules and regulations titled, "Masking in
8 Schools," which is Rhode Island Code of Regulations
9 No. 216-30-30-4. This hearing is being conducted
10 under the provisions of Rhode Island General Laws
11 Chapters 23-17 and 42-35.

12 Today is Friday, March 15, 2024. My name
13 is Zachary Garceau. I am chief program development
14 with the Office of Health Regulation at the
15 Rhode Island Department of Health, also known as
16 RIDOH. I will be the hearing officer for today's
17 proceedings.

18 Before we begin, and to prevent any
19 interruptions of the proceedings, at this time, I
20 would like to ask those of you with cell phones,
21 pagers, and watch alarms to please turn them off or
22 set them to silent or vibrate.

23 Please note there are exits located at the
24 rear of this room, and emergency exits are located

1 directly behind us and on this level of the
2 building. In the event of an emergency or fire
3 alarm, please proceed quickly and calmly, and
4 follow the exit signs to the nearest emergency exit.

5 The seating capacity of the room will be
6 enforced and, therefore, the number of persons
7 participating in the hearing may be limited at any
8 time -- at any given time in order to comply with
9 safety and fire codes.

10 The purpose of the hearing today is to
11 afford interested parties an opportunity to comment
12 on the proposed regulations, allow as many people
13 as possible to be heard, and to ensure that an
14 accurate record of all comments is obtained.

15 These proposed regulations are related to
16 communication about any future masking requirements
17 in K through 12 in school settings. RIDOH has no
18 intention, at this time, of instituting any masking
19 requirements in schools. However, if a future
20 public health ever necessitated a mask requirement
21 in schools, this regulation would require the
22 Department to detail its scientific rationale for
23 that masking requirement in a statement online.

24 RIDOH is always looking for ways to better

1 communicate with the public. The posting of such a
2 rationale online would be an additional way to keep
3 the community informed during a public health
4 emergency.

5 While all of your comments on the
6 substance of this regulation will be taken into
7 consideration, this session today is only to gather
8 input from the community. We will not be
9 responding to comments or engaging in dialogue.

10 In accordance with the terms of a
11 settlement agreement, the hearing schedule will be
12 as follows: Open public testimony will be held
13 from the start of this hearing until 11 a.m.

14 Following the conclusion of the open
15 public testimony, the plaintiffs in the case of
16 Southwell v. McKee will be granted one hour of time
17 for comments from 11 a.m. until 12 p.m.

18 Those who are non-Plaintiffs, whom the
19 Plaintiffs ask to speak on their behalf, will be
20 granted two hours, from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

21 If you would like to speak during the open
22 public testimony, the procedure we will use is as
23 follows: Please register to speak on the sign-in
24 sheet at the table in the front of the room.

1 Speakers will be called upon in the order of their
2 registration. Up to two minutes will be allowed
3 for each speaker, unless a lack of speakers allows
4 for additional time.

5 Anyone may still submit written testimony
6 through March 20th. Any interruptions due to the
7 stenographer's need to clarify your testimony will
8 not count against your allotted time.

9 If you are reading off of a prepared
10 document, such as a paper copy or electronic
11 version of your testimony, we politely request that
12 you speak clearly and at an unhurried pace so that
13 the stenographer can appropriately capture your
14 testimony in its entirety.

15 I will indicate when your time has
16 elapsed. And when you are called, please come to
17 the podium. Identify yourself by name and
18 affiliation, if any. Please spell your name, and
19 give the full name of your organization, if it uses
20 an acronym. Make your presentation and make sure
21 to conclude within the allotted two minutes.

22 If you have written a -- if you have a
23 written copy of your statement, we would appreciate
24 if you could provide it for the record. If you

1 read from an electronic version of your testimony,
2 we would appreciate if you could provide a hard
3 copy or email your testimony to us. These
4 documents can be sent to zachary.garceau --
5 G-A-R-C-E-A-U -- @health.ri.gov.

6 In accordance with the requirements of the
7 Administrative Procedures Act, additional written
8 comments on these proposed amendments will be
9 accepted through Wednesday, March 20, 2024.

10 After the conclusion of the public comment
11 period, RIDOH has four options under state law.
12 The first option is to file the regulations as
13 posted with the Secretary of State.

14 The second option is to file with minor
15 technical changes, such as correcting spelling,
16 punctuation, etc.

17 The third option is to make nontechnical
18 changes in what you see before you today, which
19 would be addressed in RIDOH's concise explanatory
20 statement filed with the final regulations and may
21 also necessitate a new, associated public notice
22 posting.

23 And the forth option is to not file the
24 regulations, in which case they would not take

1 effect.

2 Unless otherwise specified by law,
3 regulation, or at the discretion of RIDOH, once
4 filed, the regulations become effective 20 days
5 after filing and have the force of law upon that
6 date.

7 Are there any questions on how the public
8 hearing will be conducted today?

9 (NO RESPONSE)

10 MR. GARCEAU: At this time, we will
11 introduce the following exhibits, which will be
12 part of the record. Exhibit 1 is the notice of
13 proposed rulemaking posted on the Rhode Island
14 Secretary of State's website on February 2, 2024.

15 Exhibit 2 is a copy of the proposed
16 regulation posted on the Rhode Island Secretary of
17 State's website on February 2, 2024.

18 Exhibit 3 is the cost benefit analysis,
19 which was produced by RIDOH for these regulations.

20 Exhibit 4 is a copy of Rhode Island
21 General Laws 23-1-17 and 23-1-18, the enabling
22 statutes for these regulations.

23 And Exhibit 5 is a copy of the email dated
24 February 2, 2024, from the Office of Regulatory

1 Reform confirming that RIDOH was authorized to move
2 forward with the promulgation of these regulations.

3 Today, we are seeking comments from the
4 public on the proposed adoption of the regulations
5 titled, "Masking in School," that can be found on
6 the Rhode Island Secretary of State's website.

7 At this time, I would like to call the
8 first speaker. And the first speaker that's being
9 called on today is Ronald Lavallee. And if you
10 could --

11 MR. LAVALLEE: I'm not speaking, and it's
12 Roland.

13 MR. GARCEAU: Roland. Sorry. So the
14 second person that we have signed in is
15 Jason Romblad.

16 MR. ROMBLAD: Hi. Just for the record,
17 the State of Rhode Island had settled out of court
18 to hear these parents and citizens of the state.
19 And on the paper, it says they're only allowing two
20 minutes, which I have a five-minute prepared
21 statement that I would like to finish. It don't
22 look like there's too many people for you to listen
23 to so I'm going to get started.

24 Good morning. My name is Jason Romblad.

1 I am an unaffiliated voter from Woonsocket. I am
2 here today to vehemently oppose the school masking
3 proposal that the Rhode Island Department of Health
4 is proposing today.

5 I want to point out that school masking
6 started during COVID-era lockdowns using executive
7 orders and supposed emergency powers. There were
8 no studies used as a reference when issuing these
9 mandates, and there were no studies conducted in
10 this state regarding the effects on the children
11 being forced to inhale their own carbon dioxide for
12 hours at a time.

13 The uncleanliness of these masks over time
14 are detrimental to the health of the human body,
15 inhabiting the flow of fresh air and oxygen.
16 Nearly all masks worn will not stop a virus, and it
17 states exactly that on the packaging.

18 To issue these authoritative mandates,
19 with no follow-up studies, is negligent and, quite
20 frankly, should be criminal. To this day, not one
21 person under the age of 18 has died from COVID in
22 Rhode Island. This is direct information from the
23 Rhode Island Department of Health COVID portal.

24 To force masks on healthy children, who

1 have no risk of dying from a virus, is inhumane.
2 The same people who issued these mask mandates in
3 Rhode Island, including this agency, allowed masks
4 to be removed in restaurants while sitting and
5 consuming food and beverages. You expect us all
6 commonsensical people in this state to believe that
7 nonsense? Do you expect us to believe that we are
8 safe from catching a virus while we are sitting?

9 MR. GARCEAU: I'm sorry, that's two
10 minutes.

11 MR. ROMBLAD: What? That's not two
12 minutes.

13 MR. RIANNA: Let him finish.

14 MR. GARCEAU: That was two minutes.

15 MR. ROMBLAD: Dude, that wasn't two
16 minutes.

17 MR. RIANNA: You can't let him finish?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That wasn't two
19 minutes. I'm recording.

20 MR. ROMBLAD: I'm telling you, I timed it.
21 That's less than a minute. Really? No, it wasn't
22 two minutes.

23 MR. RIANNA: That's because you don't want
24 to hear what he's saying. Let him finish.

1 MR. GARCEAU: Sir, please, please.

2 MR. ROMBLAD: Dude, that was not two
3 minutes.

4 MR. GARCEAU: There are other people who
5 are signed up. We need you to --

6 MR. ROMBLAD: Dude, that was not
7 two minutes.

8 MR. GARCEAU: It was.

9 MR. ROMBLAD: No, it wasn't.

10 MR. GARCEAU: Sir, sir --

11 MR. ROMBLAD: Who's got the time up? It
12 was less than a minute. It was 45 seconds to get
13 to that point when I timed myself 20 times before I
14 read this.

15 MR. GARCEAU: Sir, sir, please.

16 MR. ROMBLAD: No.

17 MR. GARCEAU: Sir, I need to call the next
18 person, please.

19 MR. ROMBLAD: Are you serious?

20 MR. GARCEAU: Yes, I am.

21 MR. ROMBLAD: To this day, not one person
22 under the age of 18 has died from COVID in
23 Rhode Island.

24 MR. GARCEAU: Sir, sir, please.

1 MR. ROMBLAD: This is direct
2 information --

3 THE SHERIFF: Sir, I've got to ask you to
4 leave.

5 MR. ROMBLAD: Really?

6 MR. GARCEAU: Yes.

7 MR. ROMBLAD: This is bull. This is bull.
8 That was 45 seconds to get to that point and he
9 stood up and stopped me.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We defer our time.

11 THE SHERIFF: It's because you talked
12 before you actually got started on your speech.
13 That's why.

14 MR. ROMBLAD: Really? This is bull.

15 THE SHERIFF: I've got to ask you to
16 leave.

17 MR. ROMBLAD: Why have a hearing when
18 you're not going to listen to the people? Are you
19 serious? This is unbelievable.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can we donate our
21 time to him?

22 MR. ROMBLAD: Unbelievable.

23 MR. GARCEAU: We will get through all the
24 people that have signed up and if there is time --

1 MR. ROMBLAD: I want to speak again. You
2 did not give me two minutes.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He'll cut you all
4 off, too.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You need a timer.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have one. I
7 can't wait to post this.

8 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And our next
9 speaker who is signed up is Katie Aubin.

10 MS. AUBIN: Hi. My name is Katie Aubin.
11 I'm a licensed mental health clinician in the state
12 of Rhode Island. And this mask evidence-based
13 statistic is not taking social-emotional learning
14 into consideration.

15 Children have been masked for many years,
16 and we are now seeing a detriment, a pandemic of
17 mental health and special education in Rhode Island
18 and Massachusetts and everywhere across the
19 United States. Do you know why? It's because
20 children went to school with a mask on their face.

21 And I had to try to teach children on how
22 people feel by reading eyes. Three-, four-, five-,
23 six-year-olds can't read eyeballs from a person
24 across the desk from them. They can't tell if a

1 peer is upset with them. They can't tell if a peer
2 is happy with them, smiling at them. They can't
3 understand social cues at that age. They can't
4 read eyebrows. God forbid, someone like me, that
5 gets Botox and has a therapy session, they can't
6 read my frown lines. I don't have any.

7 So, again, our children are suffering
8 if we mask them for, God forbid, RSV, the flu,
9 chicken pox. We are creating a mental health
10 social-cue crisis in the state of Rhode Island.
11 So, again, before you mask your children, think
12 about the social/emotional learning that this has.
13 Okay.

14 Again, do you think a three-year-old can
15 decide what this guy feels? What's this guy --
16 this guy is really mad. Ask a three-year-old to
17 read those eyes. He doesn't know, she doesn't know
18 what they're thinking. This poor woman is scared.
19 Do her eyes say scared? Maybe. Maybe they say
20 surprised. No one knows.

21 Please, before the Rhode Island Department
22 of Health masks children again, think about what
23 you're creating for our future. Thank you.

24 MR. GARCEAU: Thank you. And our next

1 speaker is Jennifer Hall.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Jennifer Hall is
3 still in transit.

4 MR. GARCEAU: Okay. Then our next speaker
5 is Lisa Ponroy.

6 MS. PONROY: Good morning. My name is
7 Lisa Ponroy. I am -- I received my undergraduate
8 degree at Princeton University with a degree in
9 molecular biology. I graduated cum laude. I
10 received a medical degree at Emory University just
11 down the road from the CDC. I did a residency
12 program at Women & Infants through Brown University,
13 and feel that I am, you know, appropriate to speak
14 on this matter.

15 I have three children who were in middle
16 school and high school when this whole epidemic
17 began. I am appalled that you would even
18 consider approving a regulation giving the
19 Rhode Island Department of Health authorization to
20 once again impose mask mandates on our children.

21 You know, as well as I do, that masking
22 our school children did absolutely nothing to
23 prevent the spread of COVID, nor did it prevent the
24 spread of any other viral, upper respiratory

1 infection. You so much as admit this in your first
2 proposed regulation where you state, "An absence of
3 scientific evidence regarding the effectiveness of
4 face masks against a specific pathogen will not
5 prevent the Department in considering a face-mask
6 requirement."

7 Enough with this charade of claiming to
8 want to protect our children. The masks in schools
9 did nothing of the sort. All they did was force
10 our children to rebreathe stale air and expose them
11 to harmful fungi, bacteria, and chemical substances
12 present in the masks. They caused rashes,
13 illnesses, headaches, difficulty breathing,
14 learning loss, stunting our children's emotional
15 development, and exacerbated the already growing
16 mental health crisis in our kids.

17 To once again consider forcing our kids to
18 mask at your whim is a complete abrogation of your
19 responsibility towards the health of the citizens
20 of Rhode Island, particularly our children. You
21 should be ashamed of yourselves. Do not project
22 your fears onto our children.

23 MR. GARCEAU: All right. That's two
24 minutes.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Who are these two
2 lovely ladies at the front of the room?

3 MS. CIRIGNOTTA: Yeah, we'd like to
4 request to know who we're speaking to, is that all
5 right?

6 COURT REPORTER: I need your names if
7 you're on the record. So if you're going to talk,
8 I need your names.

9 MS. CIRIGNOTTA: We were just asking who
10 we're speaking to.

11 MS. GOULETTE: I'm Chris Goulette. I'm
12 division director for Emergency Preparedness and
13 Infectious Disease.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you say that
15 again.

16 MS. GOULETTE: Sure. Chris Goulette.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: From where?

18 MS. GOULETTE: Emergency Preparedness and
19 Infectious Disease at RIDOH.

20 MS. COMELLA: And my name is
21 Jamie Comella. I'm the chief for the Center for
22 COVID-19 Epidemiology.

23 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And our next
24 speaker is Joseph Daley.

1 MR. DALEY: Good morning. Good morning,
2 everyone. My name is Joseph Daley. I'm a parent
3 of three children from South Kingstown,
4 Rhode Island. And the proposed mask mandate for
5 schools had a direct impact on my family. I had
6 two school-aged children at the time. They had a
7 terrible experience masking. They were bullied by
8 teachers when they simply wanted a small break.
9 They came home every single day complaining about
10 it. They had difficulty breathing. It affected
11 their mental well-being. It affected their ability
12 to make relationships. My son was a kindergartner.
13 His first experience in school was wearing a mask,
14 not being able to communicate well with these new
15 people and his teacher.

16 I'm, in fact, an elementary schoolteacher.
17 We had to pull our kids out of school because we
18 realized how bad it was, not only for their social
19 well-being and their emotional well-being, but for
20 their education, too. I saw students have a huge
21 learning loss. When you think about things like
22 phonemic awareness and vocabulary development and
23 reading fluency, how can you possibly be expected
24 to do that well in an elementary school when you're

1 masked, when your teacher is masked. You can't see
2 their face, you can't see their mouth.

3 So if the DOH is going to propose a
4 regulation like this, I would say I have yet to see
5 any study say what the impact is on education. How
6 do we address the learning loss? You can't get
7 back these years for five-, six-, seven-,
8 eight-year-olds. It's gone. How important is that
9 compared to a virus which killed no children in
10 Rhode Island.

11 How did it impact kids -- it was a blip on
12 their radar healthwise, but what was not a blip on
13 their radar was the loss to learning. The year
14 after I came back to school, I remember seeing a
15 sign in the building, and it said, "The four
16 elements of connection. All learning begins with
17 connections. Connections to the outside with other
18 people actually create and strengthen" --

19 MR. GARCEAU: That's two minutes.

20 MR. DALEY: -- "neuro connections within
21 the brain." Masking ruined people's connections,
22 and it ruined it for our children. Thank you.

23 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And our next
24 speaker is Tara Mellow.

1 MS. MELLOW: Good morning. I'm a first
2 grade teacher. And I just want to say that,
3 although the masks were to protect everybody, they
4 absolutely did not. People were still getting sick
5 all the time. Everybody was masking up all day,
6 every day, for days and days and forever, and
7 nobody was not getting sick. Everybody was still
8 getting sick. And we were supposed to be
9 protecting people.

10 And I'm telling you the kids, with their
11 masks on, did not talk. Why would you repeat
12 yourself? Why would you explain yourself when you
13 can't even be heard? Never mind I'm trying to
14 teach the ABCs. T-H, you have to stick your tongue
15 out. You have to go with. Not with. So all these
16 teachings I was trying to do, I would pull my mask
17 down. Guess what, I got called to the principal's
18 office like three times.

19 So I'm telling you, the ignorance that was
20 spread still goes on. It still is going on right
21 now. I saw a Head Start class. Ten kids marched
22 into our gym wearing masks still. So the crime was
23 four years ago, but it's still going on. And
24 there's a whole bunch of misinformation about this.

1 I'm nervous right now because I usually
2 teach six-year-olds. But I'll tell you, this is
3 really, seriously, should never ever be ever, ever,
4 ever again, and hide the fact that it ever did
5 happen. Because it's horrifying, the crime against
6 kids not being able to talk to their friends.

7 My son had to play basketball running up
8 and down the court with a mask on. Crime upon
9 crime. A lasagna of crimes. Never again. Put it
10 away forever.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Never again. Never
12 again.

13 MS. MELLO: Thank you.

14 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And our next
15 speaker is Cherie Waluk.

16 MS. WALUK: Hello and good morning,
17 everyone. I basically want to address you folks
18 because these guys know me. A lot of them we got
19 together at the beginning of COVID because we
20 knew -- we knew there was going to be mandates
21 coming down the line. We were very vigilant and
22 aware that the Rhode Island Department of Health,
23 the governor's office, our schools were going to
24 impose them.

1 I spent an entire summer with some of my
2 friends here going to school committee after school
3 committee. I have notebooks full of things to
4 prepare to speak about that we did -- you know,
5 that we spoke about at the State House. Every
6 school committee. Because we just wanted to go
7 choice.

8 I know I have to be quick. I have three
9 kids from the Portsmouth district. My youngest was
10 not able to go to school for a full year. He has a
11 developmental delay, a coordination disorder, and I
12 was told that he was not allowed to come to school
13 because he couldn't wear a mask. So, subsequently,
14 I had to hold him back an entire year of school.

15 I had my oldest daughter. She presented
16 with PTSD, stress, and an eating disorder. I'm
17 being really vulnerable here saying this out loud.
18 Those were the impacts of masking, lockdowns, and
19 just the stress and the fear of it.

20 What you didn't understand was how the
21 teachers were going to react to masking. My
22 daughter was told she was going to kill the
23 teacher's grandchild that was just born if she
24 pulled her mask down.

1 Now, I have a niece who was also
2 hospitalized for suicide watch. My sister died two
3 years prior. My kids were in trauma, my nieces
4 were in trauma, COVID hit, you imposed this mask
5 mandate, you imposed lockdowns on these kids. You
6 don't know the prior trauma. There was never a
7 risk-benefit analysis.

8 We've never seen 12-year-olds masked and
9 under in other countries, but we decided to do it
10 here in the U.S. We know better, we knew better.
11 This regulation would really impact damage kids who
12 have already been in trauma, who already have
13 psychological problems and issues. It's taken me
14 two years to heal my children. We didn't crusade
15 because we wanted to just raise the flag and
16 crusade. We did it because we give, you know --

17 MR. GARCEAU: That's two minutes, please.

18 MS. WALUK: -- we care about our kids. So
19 thank you for listening.

20 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
21 is Paul Rianna.

22 MR. RIANNA: Hello, everybody. I'll try
23 to make it brief, sweet, and short because I know
24 I'm going to be interrupted.

1 Okay. So as we all know, during the
2 lockdowns, they imposed vaccine mandates on us,
3 mask mandates on us, ruling as tyrants. Basically,
4 affecting the mental health of children. I worked
5 at Fatima Hospital as a mental health worker. So I
6 seen the impacts. And what you are doing is
7 criminal, and you should all be ashamed of
8 yourselves. You are disgusting individuals. You
9 took away livelihoods. You impacted children to
10 heights you'll never understand.

11 As for you trying to stop people's speech,
12 it's sad and disgusting. We have the right for
13 freedom of speech. Let these people speak. You've
14 held us down for two or three years, and we've been
15 silenced. The parents are tired of being silenced.
16 The nurses are tired of being silenced. CNAs,
17 professionals, we're all tired of you guys.

18 You don't know what you're doing. You
19 rule through executive order. Thank God
20 Alexander-Scott's gone. You know what I mean, the
21 true governor of Rhode Island, because you know
22 that's how that worked.

23 But we're just fed up, and we're tired.
24 Leave our kids alone. They're not your children.

1 They didn't come out of you.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's right.

3 MR. RIANNA: And yous need to understand
4 that we're not going to deal with it. We
5 protested, and it was peaceful, but there's going
6 to be a time where it's not going to be so peaceful
7 because yous people want to become tyrants. And
8 you needs to understand, like I said, we are fed
9 up. And I am fed up. You know what I mean?

10 I love protesting. I can come down here
11 every day if I didn't have to work. Which is
12 another disgusting thing that you made it during
13 work hours so not everybody's voice could be heard.
14 Everyone's voice should be heard in the state of
15 Rhode Island, not just through a certain time
16 period. And that's what yous need to understand.
17 And I may not speak professional or articulate, but
18 my point's getting across.

19 MR. GARCEAU: Two minutes, please.

20 MR. RIANNA: I don't care. I'm talking.
21 Sit down. Thank you. Shut up. Anyway, I'm going
22 to keep talking. I don't care what you do. Don't
23 come near me. Don't come near me. I'm scared.
24 You might have COVID. And you don't have a mask

1 on, so.

2 MR. GARCEAU: Sir.

3 MR. RIANNA: Let me finish. You don't
4 have a mask. Please, let me finish what I have to
5 say. And this is why people in Rhode Island get
6 mad because you give them two minutes to speak
7 about two or three years of trauma.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, exactly.

9 MR. RIANNA: You see, and that's why
10 Rhode Islanders are fed up with the Department of
11 Health, the governor, the lieutenant governor, and
12 all the progressive agenda. I'm being peaceful. I
13 haven't swore. Trust me, this is not even level 10
14 of Paul Rianna. You know what I mean? So I'm
15 going to stop speaking now, and now you may come to
16 the podium.

17 MR. GARCEAU: And our next speaker is
18 Pat Ford.

19 MR. FORD: Hi. My name is Pat Ford. I
20 represent the Coalition Radio Network and --

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can't hear you,
22 Pat.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Microphone.

24 MR. FORD: Hey. My name is Pat Ford, and

1 I represent the Coalition Radio Network. We're an
2 independent media firm here based in Providence,
3 Rhode Island.

4 First of all, I want to thank all of you,
5 for me personally, for being here. This is an
6 astonishing turnout. Friday morning on a workday,
7 9 a.m. Wow. It's impressive to see the type of
8 effort that's been attained by a number of
9 organizations in this community over a couple of
10 years.

11 To my point, I want to talk about the
12 media for the minute or so that I've got. The
13 Rhode Island Department of Health -- and I've never
14 been able to get a clear APRA back on this, as far
15 as what was actually spent, but by my estimate, it
16 spent millions of dollars of taxpayer money on the
17 media. Now, in the year 2024, 2023, 2020,
18 regardless, how do we subvert freedom of speech?
19 How do we subvert people's right to know? We buy
20 off the media.

21 I'm sitting there at WaterFire one night,
22 having a peaceful moment after a full rewarding
23 week of work, much like all of you. It's about
24 eleven o'clock at night, it's starting to rain, and

1 I hear Dr. Scott intone those magic words, "masks
2 work." My God. It became 1984 right here in
3 Providence.

4 All that was missing was the 7-by-24
5 broadcast into our homes. The Rhode Island
6 Department of Health actually sponsored the
7 Bristol Fourth of July parade in order to convey
8 their totalitarian message.

9 So in the media climate of 2020, 2023,
10 2024, regardless, with the financial difficulties
11 being faced by TV stations, how would you expect
12 them to respond? Would you expect an aggressive
13 line of questioning from the media, from the
14 reporters, from the whatever-fill-in-the-blank
15 team. No, of course not, because they're under the
16 corporate muzzle that's dictated by the millions of
17 dollars this state spent to enforce an illegal and
18 immoral mandate. Thank you.

19 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
20 is Jennifer Wilson.

21 MS. WILSON: Hi. My name is
22 Jennifer Wilson. I am a mother of two minor
23 children. I worked full-time all during the
24 pandemic in a pharmacy, a very busy pharmacy. I

1 was on the front lines. I was actually the first
2 person in my store to put a mask on because I
3 didn't know. You know, we didn't know back in
4 March of 2020. We stayed in our homes, we washed
5 our hands, we did everything we were expected to do
6 because we didn't know.

7 By June of 2020 I knew. I knew that I
8 wasn't at risk. I knew my children weren't at
9 risk. And the data was becoming increasingly
10 clear. I pulled my children out of public schools.
11 They did a horrible job with remote learning. And
12 I pulled them because of the mask requirements. I
13 refused to subject them to your illegal mandates.
14 I would never let you displace -- thank you -- I
15 would never let you dictate health decisions for me
16 or my children. And I will do it again and again.
17 I would have no problem pulling them again.

18 There is absolutely no scientific evidence
19 that proves that healthy people should ever be
20 masked. And there's absolutely no reason why you
21 should be making decisions for my family and my
22 health. Thank you.

23 MADDIE WILSON: My name is Maddie Wilson.
24 I was born with spina bifida, and I've had eight

1 surgeries in 14 years. My medical decisions are to
2 be made by only my parents, doctors, and myself.
3 It's not right for the Department of Health to make
4 these decisions for me. I am an independent,
5 free-thinking, young woman, and smart enough to
6 make these choices for myself.

7 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
8 is Lisa Daft.

9 MS. DAFT: My name is Dr. Lisa Daft, and
10 that's a tough act to follow. But I did send
11 written testimony, but I decided to speak.

12 My son was a junior, senior in high school
13 and was forced to wear a mask while he played
14 football outside. I'm not going to get into the
15 details because everyone else has.

16 But what I wanted to add to my written
17 testimony, I am a full-time practicing dentist,
18 very knowledgeable and educated in infection
19 control. We live in and breathe by that. In fact,
20 the dental office was one of the safest places to
21 be probably during the pandemic, and I worked the
22 whole time. Masks work in certain situations,
23 clearly, because we've been masking since 19 --
24 early 1980s, but that's because the nature of our

1 job and how close we work to the oral environment,
2 and we're protecting against many more important
3 things than COVID.

4 But moving forward, I don't think this
5 regulation should move forward at all. This is --
6 the Rhode Island Department of Health should not be
7 making mandates or suggested mandates. They should
8 be a recommendations only policy department. The
9 CDC does not make mandates. They make
10 recommendations. And the Rhode Island Department
11 of Health should be making recommendations.

12 The language in this violation -- the
13 language in this regulation is very vague, and I
14 feel will allow the Rhode Island Department of
15 Health to mandate masks based on any perceived
16 threat. The only research done to date prove that
17 masks didn't prevent the spread of COVID. The
18 Rhode Island Department of Health should be
19 focusing on educating families on how they can
20 prevent illness and not mandating masks that have
21 been proven ineffective. Thank you.

22 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And our next
23 speaker is Tracy Tellier.

24 MS. TELLIER: Good morning, everyone. I

1 decided to speak off the cuff just because I'm just
2 getting angry. So shame on all of you. Shame on
3 you. Shame, shame, shame, shame, shame. That's
4 all I have to say is shame.

5 And I will say this, you will never -- you
6 lost all credibility and trust. You want to know
7 why? Because you didn't prove anything in
8 Southwell v. McKee. You deflected, you delayed.
9 You didn't prove anything. And you think you're
10 going to make any health decisions over my
11 children? I don't think so.

12 And you want to know something else. My
13 daughter -- my daughter played soccer in a mask.
14 And you want to know where she played? The
15 Wide World of Sports in Smithfield. And you want
16 to know what was next to her, 5 feet away? Grown
17 men, partying like rock stars with their damn no
18 masks, drinking beer. Right. Because that's
19 really -- that's really -- that's really effective.
20 So we're in a pandemic so scary, men can drink
21 beer. You want to know why? Because it's all
22 about the money. Just say it. Our kids wear masks
23 over money. You guys took money over our kids.
24 That's what you did. The schools took money.

1 Masking for dollars. That's what you did.

2 And my son, my son sat over there -- my
3 son sitting over there had to listen to teachers
4 telling him how he was going to kill them because I
5 told my children, "You pull that damn thing down.
6 You pull it to breathe oxygen. Because that is
7 your God-given right. You're not to breathe
8 recycled air." I told the principal that. And
9 they knew who I was. My children were to breathe
10 oxygen. And how dare those teachers tell my
11 children there were diseased vectors that were
12 going to kill them.

13 You guys should be ashamed. I wouldn't
14 listen to you -- I wouldn't listen to you for
15 anything. You don't know health at all. I still
16 remember the representative at one of the bills --

17 MR. GARCEAU: That's time.

18 MS. TELLIER: -- he had a mask, and he was
19 obese. You guys don't -- I'm done. Good-bye.

20 MR. GARCEAU: And our next speaker is
21 Kathryn Tellier.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, Kathryn.

23 KATHRYN TELLIER: Hi. I'm

24 Kathryn Tellier, and I am against the masking

1 regulation. I will never go through what you did
2 to all of us children ever again.

3 I ran 90-plus minutes down a full-size
4 soccer field with nothing but a cloth covering my
5 airway. I was isolated from my friends my whole
6 fifth grade year and my whole sixth grade year.
7 You made me sit in one classroom for six-plus hours
8 in the same chair breathing in nothing but my own
9 breath, while I was supposed to be getting
10 educated. I was told to deal with it when I
11 couldn't breathe.

12 You never had to go through what you made
13 all of us little children do. You made me feel
14 like a diseased animal and that I had to be locked
15 up. You put all these rules on us without even
16 experiencing it for yourself. You traumatized all
17 these kids without even knowing it. Thank you.

18 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And our next
19 speaker is Jennifer Lebeau.

20 MS. LEBEAU: Hello. I'm also just
21 speaking just off the cuff today. I had two high
22 school students --

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Use the mike.

24 MS. LEBEAU: I had two high school

1 students during the time of COVID. One was at
2 Classical, and one was at P-TECH in the electrical
3 program. They both suffer from severe seasonal
4 allergies, and the mask obstructed their ability to
5 breathe.

6 I had to keep my son, who was in the
7 electrical program, home from school because he
8 couldn't breathe all day, and he missed vital,
9 critical lessons and fell behind to the point where
10 he, as a 17-year-old, told me he would like to go
11 to CCRI to make up the lost time and the lost
12 lessons that he had to sit home from.

13 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And just to
14 remind everyone who has just joined us, if you'd
15 like to speak, please register at the table on the
16 side over there. And we will be allowing everybody
17 up to two minutes to speak, just so that we can
18 ensure that everybody who signs up is allowed to
19 have time to speak. And our next speaker is --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me, can you
21 just give the mike a tap there. Is it on?

22 MR. GARCEAU: Okay. Sorry. And our next
23 speaker is Carol Daulcas.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Go, Carol.

1 MS. DAULCAS: This podium really should be
2 facing this way. We're talking -- can you hear?
3 Can you hear me? Okay. I'm putting my stopwatch
4 on.

5 So, hi. My name is Carol Daulcas from
6 Westerly, Rhode Island. I've spoken several times
7 now about masks and the physical and emotional harm
8 that they've caused everybody, especially children.
9 And it's mind-boggling that we are all still here
10 talking about this.

11 I have two children of my own who were
12 forced to wear masks, and one of them ran
13 competitive track. It was criminal. And I
14 remember so clearly Nicole Alexander-Scott
15 proclaiming, almost scolding, "masks work." No,
16 they don't. How dare she, as director of
17 Rhode Island Department of Health, enforce a lie.
18 It was an awful, awful ignorant time for
19 Rhode Island citizens because of this Department.

20 The verdict is long in -- we all know
21 it -- masks do not stop the spread of flu-like
22 illnesses. In fact, the Cochran review, which is
23 the gold standard of systematic review in
24 meta-analysis of medical research, concludes that

1 wearing a face mask makes little to no difference
2 in how many people catch a flu-like illness.

3 And Judge Lanphear declared that wearing
4 masks caused irreparable harm to our children.
5 We've heard a lot of this. Irreparable harm. So
6 you know all of this. You cannot ignore this and
7 retain any credibility or trustworthiness if you
8 continue to push the mask. You want to regain
9 credibility.

10 Let's be bluntly honest, if RIDOH is
11 grasping to retain the right to mandate masks, it's
12 akin to saying you espouse child abuse and blatant
13 tyranny over Rhode Island citizens. That's what it
14 is. It's blatant tyranny. So stop the dangerous,
15 disgraceful, and ignorant overreach. Stop it. We
16 will not wear masks again.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Never again.
18 Never.

19 MS. DAULCAS: Take the chance to turn this
20 around. Nobody's going to wear a mask again.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Never again.

22 MS. DAULCAS: Turn it around. Thank you.

23 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
24 is Christine Cooke.

1 MS. COOKE: Good morning. So I am an
2 eight-year member -- almost eight-year member of
3 the Westerly School Committee, and I was in the
4 unfortunate position of being the chair at the time
5 during the pandemic. So I sat and listened to the
6 pleas and the cries and, you know, actually the
7 tearful cries of the parents coming to us week
8 after week begging us to please unmask our kids.

9 I will proudly tell you that I would come
10 out of the executive sessions we would hold, and I
11 would not wear a mask, and my colleagues all had
12 masks on to send a message. And I was told I was
13 not sending the right message because I wasn't
14 wearing a mask. I said, quite the opposite, I'm
15 sending exactly the right message.

16 So, at the time, I worked for
17 Westerly Hospital so I was in the medical community
18 at the time. I heard all of the lack of science
19 from that end as well. We know there is no
20 scientific rationale for the masks, but there's
21 definitely a scientific rationale for not masking.
22 There's no question about that.

23 I will tell you, never again in Westerly.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Never again.

1 MS. COOKE: We have another colleague here
2 who serves in the school committee with me who is
3 one of the parents who would come up and be at the
4 podium, and I'll never forget her. She ran for
5 office. She won on masking, by the way.

6 So I will tell you, as a school committee,
7 we are now cleaning up the mess that was caused by
8 the Department of Health and the governor. And it
9 is absolutely painful to see the statistics coming
10 in about the mental health issues we're seeing.
11 We're calling it a mental health crisis that we're
12 now dealing with.

13 Somebody else referred to it as the new
14 pandemic. And it is real. It's not just
15 statistics. These are people, human beings, kids.
16 It's suicide attempts. We have a very high suicide
17 rate of children in our community. And we are
18 now -- I will fight it tooth and nail.

19 I was the school committee member who told
20 our superintendent, go against the mandate. Go
21 against the mandate. Who cares what the governor
22 says. Go against the mandate. I couldn't get the
23 four votes, but I'll tell you, we'll get them next
24 time.

1 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And for our next
2 speaker -- actually, I can't quite read the last
3 name, but it is Mary and the email address is
4 mary@williams. Sorry.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm not going to
6 speak.

7 MR. GARCEAU: Oh, you're not. Okay. All
8 right then, our next speaker is Jeremy Bailey.

9 MR. BAILEY: Thank you. My name is
10 Jeremy Bailey. I'm a member of the town council in
11 Burrillville. I'm not going to repeat all the
12 stuff here, although I agree with everything
13 that -- pretty much everything that I've heard here
14 today. I'm going to talk to you about unfunded
15 mandates, and our school committee should listen to
16 this.

17 When COVID happened, what happened is many
18 parents decided not to participate in the mandates.
19 They pulled their kids out of school. Now they're
20 homeschooled. Well, when it comes to time to
21 balance a town's budget, you lose state money when
22 your kids do not attend the public school. What
23 happened during the whole COVID thing is the State
24 made up for any money that we would have lost from

1 the students being pulled out.

2 I know for a fact, from all the parents
3 that I've spoken with, if this happens again,
4 they're pulling their kids back out again for
5 whatever reason. And if the State does not make up
6 for that -- those funds, we're going to run a
7 significant deficit in our town.

8 So I implore the State to use a
9 commonsense solution, which is choice. If you feel
10 unsafe, put on one of those masks. I know one of
11 the filthiest things in our household were the
12 masks. Why? Because we're running in and out
13 every day so the mask pretty much lived in my
14 pocket.

15 So -- and I know for a fact that, as I
16 have fairly good hygiene, the children that are out
17 there, they're mostly like me or worse where they
18 drop the mask, they step on it, they pick it up,
19 they're putting in back in their face, and then
20 they stick it in their pocket at the end of the day
21 and they put it back on their face the next day. I
22 was watching them do it. I coach sports, I do all
23 this for children's sports. It was really bad.

24 We should never be masking our children

1 for many reasons like Ms. Aubin spoke to back
2 there. You know, the mental health crisis that
3 we've created from this for no protection.

4 I'll finish with this. I have family
5 members that work in hospitals. These are people
6 wearing properly fitted N95 masks. They made them
7 put additional masks on top of that and shields.
8 100 percent of them got COVID in these departments.
9 So if you're telling me that my filthy, little mask
10 in my pocket is going to help, it's not. It's just
11 creating a problem.

12 So we implore the State to never impose
13 mandates. It's un-American. I'm pretty sure it's
14 unconstitutional, although, I'm not an attorney and
15 I'm not a judge. Thank you very much.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Never again.

17 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
18 is Alexandra Lepore.

19 MS. LEPORE: Hello. I'm
20 Alexandra Lepore. I am a spiritual life coach. I
21 am eastern regional coordinator for the
22 Independent American Patriots, but I am here as a
23 sovereign citizen and a resident of Rhode Island.

24 I did send you an email with attachments

1 of 200-plus medical studies on the ineffectiveness
2 of masks and the harms that it causes, including
3 testicular dysfunction. We have an abundance of
4 carbon dioxide that builds in our system through
5 rebreathing it, and it is bad for our brains.

6 Imagine our children.

7 So me, being an ordinary citizen, that can
8 find this medical and scientific data and analysis,
9 I beg you -- from the Department of Health -- to
10 stop following the FDA and the CDC and the
11 World Health Organization and the World Economic
12 Forum, and I think you should work for the people
13 that have paid your salaries. We pay your
14 salaries.

15 And everybody that has come here, I think
16 you've done a great job of standing up to tyranny.
17 And, hey, I know you're doing your job. But, you
18 know, people in your community are worth more than
19 money. We've forgotten that as a humanity.

20 And I beg you to all start doing your own
21 research. I ask you, with respect, if you are
22 medical people, take the time, look at the
23 scientific studies. Go to The Lancet. I do. You
24 know, stop trusting blindly what they feed you. We

1 are American. American. We don't get ruled. You
2 work for us.

3 MR. GARCEAU: Our next speaker is
4 Allen Waters.

5 MR. WATERS: Good morning, everyone.

6 AUDIENCE: Good morning.

7 MR. WATERS: God bless us all.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes. Amen.

9 MR. WATERS: I'm Allen Waters, citizen,
10 fourth-generation Rhode Islanders, resident of
11 Providence, graduate of Providence public schools
12 and University of Rhode Island. I've been here.
13 My roots are in Rhode Island.

14 Some of the things that I believe in is
15 freedom of the individual, we all must be free, and
16 limited government, which is as little government
17 as possible for us to be able to function and to be
18 safe.

19 Masks don't work. It was easy 101. Even
20 on the CDC, before they started hiding it, they
21 said that surgical masks were not designed to block
22 the virus pathogens.

23 And so I would like to say, I have a son
24 at LaSalle. And in his freshman year, when he was

1 running indoor track, and they all wore masks, it
2 was one of the most bizarre experiences I seen
3 watching students run and try to breathe
4 athletically through surgical masks. As you would
5 know, they put them aside, they put them on their
6 nose.

7 And little children, these masks aren't
8 sealed. We know that they don't block the viruses
9 at the microns that viruses are at.

10 So all I wanted to say is that I would
11 like to state to not mandate masks for children in
12 the future. Thank you very much.

13 MR. GARCEAU: And our next speaker is
14 Denise Miller.

15 MS. MILLER: Hello everyone. My name is
16 Denise Miller. I'm a resident of Tiverton. I
17 didn't come with anything prepared. I'm just
18 trying to speak off the top of my head.

19 However, the town councilman from
20 Burrillville, I think, brought up a good point
21 because we're actually experiencing this right now
22 in Tiverton where our school budget is operating at
23 a deficit. We've had a mass exodus of students.
24 The State has pulled significant funding because of

1 that. And if you ask a lot of the parents, why did
2 you pull your children to homeschool, private
3 school, whatever it is, a lot of them will say,
4 well, it had to do with the past five years from
5 COVID. The mask mandates, the vaccine mandates,
6 all of that stuff. It directly affects everybody.

7 A policy should never be to mask a student
8 for six hours a day. It's unscientific, and it's
9 not supported. And you know that. You're the
10 Department of Health, you know that.

11 You should never impose anything to make
12 it mandatory. All the policies that we have are to
13 not do something. You can't bring a gun to school.
14 You can't wear flip-flops. You can't wear a tank
15 top. But you're trying to implement a policy to
16 force students to do something.

17 And not only that, it has nothing to do
18 with COVID. Your policy is so broad. You're
19 saying, "any infectious disease." You haven't even
20 said what infectious disease are you talking about.
21 So anything? That's ridiculous. It's unheard of.

22 And I cannot even believe we're still here
23 four years later. I can't believe it. You can't
24 do this. The policy has to be this: It has to be

1 choice, and it has to be based on a recommendation
2 only.

3 MR. GARCEAU: Our next speaker is
4 Mark Brody.

5 MR. BRODY: Thank you. I had a prepared
6 speech which I'm going to not read because I feel
7 like it would be more effective by speaking off the
8 cuff. So forgive me if I search around a little
9 bit.

10 I trained as a physician many years ago.
11 I trained as a child psychiatrist at
12 Bradley Hospital. I was forced to give up my
13 medical license in 19 -- in 2021 because I told my
14 patients the truth according to scientific
15 literature that I was familiar with. The
16 Department of Health didn't appreciate my telling
17 my patients the truth, and they came up with some
18 bogus accusations. And these are currently going
19 to be fought, but at the time, on the advice of my
20 attorney, I agreed to give up my license. I'm
21 practicing now in Rhode Island,
22 Integrative Healthcare under the Health Freedom Law.

23 Now, many -- the people who are
24 representing the Department of Health may, in fact,

1 not be acting for any personal reasons to either
2 beliefs that these masks are helpful. They may be
3 acting at the behest of higher powers. I know the
4 Federation of Medical Boards is probably behind the
5 actions of the local Department of Health against
6 me. But I'm going to ask you, are you willing to
7 stand up for what you believe when you know that
8 the science doesn't support the policies you're
9 asked to support? I was. I paid the price.
10 People who chose to get their jobs, they protected
11 themselves at the cost of child health.

12 Let me just ask you -- I'm just going to
13 finish with one more thing. What are the mental
14 health effects -- I have three children who are all
15 in school -- of bringing a kid into a restaurant
16 and telling them that they can unmask while they
17 eat and it's no danger to others, and then they
18 have to wear the mask when they're walking out?
19 What does that do to kids' heads? I'm a child
20 psychiatrist. I'm telling you, that is messing
21 with people's minds.

22 MR. GARCEAU: Our next speaker is
23 Niyoka Powell.

24 MS. POWELL: Good morning. So I wrote

1 something, but then realized there's not much time.
2 My name is Niyoka Powell. I am here today in
3 support of my daughter. I am not in support of
4 what the Department of Health is trying to do to
5 our children.

6 My experience with the Department of
7 Health revolved around a 19-year-old working as a
8 CNA at Roger William Medical Center, when we had a
9 tuberculosis patient -- who, by the way, I
10 determined that that patient was TB positive. The
11 doctors went ahead, did the testing, that patient
12 was TB positive. And then six months later, they
13 reached out to me and said, hey, by the way, that
14 patient, you were exposed. You need to go get INH,
15 and you need to get tested for this.

16 I said, I was not born in this country,
17 ma'am. I was given the BCG shot as a child in
18 Jamaica. I will come up positive. You need to do
19 something else. The infection control nurse tells
20 me, oh, no, we're still going to do a PPD. It
21 comes back positive. I have to go to the
22 RISE Clinic and take nine months of a medication
23 that I didn't have to take. That could have easily
24 been dealt with with a chest x-ray, with blood

1 work, to tell whether or not I was, in fact,
2 infected.

3 So that was my first experience with the
4 Department of Health. As a student at Rhode Island
5 College, a nursing student. Right. So then I said
6 okay. I'm going to do what they tell me because
7 this letter says they're going to press charges if
8 I don't.

9 Fast forward to 2020. I volunteered my
10 time to test all of Block Island for COVID. I went
11 over there on my own free time twice a week, back
12 and forth on that ferry, and every other weekend.
13 No pay, no nothing, out of the kindness of my heart
14 to figure out what the heck is going on.

15 So then they tell us that we have to mask
16 all our kids. We have to mask up. We have to do
17 this. We have to do that. And I said, this does
18 not seem right. This does not feel right. All
19 the -- everything is saying no. Medications are
20 coming out.

21 MR. GARCEAU: It's been two minutes.

22 MR. RIANNA: Let her finish.

23 MS. POWELL: Medications are coming out
24 and they're telling us, okay, it does not go well

1 with anything. The data shows that even the
2 earlier version of this vaccine does not work. My
3 child ended up with refractory epilepsy.

4 MR. GARCEAU: That's two minutes.

5 MS. POWELL: Refractory epilepsy.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Let her finish.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Let her finish.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Give her my two
9 minutes.

10 MS. POWELL: It has been the biggest
11 roller coaster of our lives, and she is not
12 allowed, per her doctors, to put a mask on her face
13 because that is one of her triggers. Along with a
14 long slew of things and a four-year-old having to
15 be put on a bunch of seizure medications that, to
16 this day, we still haven't found the right dosage
17 for.

18 So you're telling me that all these
19 parents in here mean nothing to the Department of
20 Health. And why is it specifically that you're
21 trying to go to the children and not everybody else
22 in this state? Why do you just want the schools?
23 I am fed up, like every other parent in here. So
24 do diligence and do right by the community and

1 actually focus on what's actually right for us.

2 MR. GARCEAU: And our next speaker is
3 Haleigh Mooney.

4 HALEIGH MOONEY: Hi. I'm Haleigh. I'm
5 14. I was in fourth grade -- fourth and fifth
6 grade I had to be masked. I was playing
7 basketball. We had to do, like, six -- we had to
8 run up and back the court six times and then again
9 six times. I don't know -- I honestly don't know
10 how I did it. I don't know how anyone did it.

11 Softball I had to run outside, basketball
12 I was inside, like, cooped up. Like, I couldn't do
13 anything. Like, I got bad anxiety from it. I
14 got -- like, I had trouble breathing from it. I
15 now have, like, anxiety from, like, not being able
16 to breathe.

17 I remember, like, Christmas I got COVID.
18 I had to be in my room with a mask because everyone
19 was scared to be around me because, like, everyone
20 was scared of being masked, and I couldn't see
21 anyone on Christmas and New Year's.

22 School was -- it was hard in school
23 because I, like, couldn't get any relationships
24 with people. I couldn't find anyone that, like,

1 kind of understood me, like, with me having to wear
2 a mask. I couldn't, like, make connections with
3 people. And it was hard to learn. Like, it made
4 me -- it put me behind in learning. I felt, like,
5 very behind in fourth and fifth grade. I didn't
6 really know what to do. And then I got to sixth.
7 And I was just a ten-year-old. I didn't really
8 know how to react.

9 I just wanted to kind of come up and share
10 my story because I know I'm happy for all these
11 parents trying to protect us, but please don't make
12 me go through that again.

13 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
14 is Sharon Santos, I believe it is.

15 MS. SANTOS: Hello. I really just want to
16 say quickly that sitting here watching you hit this
17 and being like, this is your time, this is your
18 time. We've been chilling for, like, many years
19 now waiting to get this off our chest because
20 nobody listens, nobody looks us in the eye, nobody
21 actually acts like they are hearing anything that
22 we're saying. And I know that you've been sitting
23 here listening to everybody, and I know that this
24 is not all on your backs, but, like, it seems

1 really disrespectful. And you reversed it, we were
2 doing this, it would be a different situation. Am
3 I right? So if you could reinstate my time. Thank
4 you.

5 So I did email this, but since beginning
6 this journey of having school-aged children and
7 seeing how invasive many of RIDOH policies are and
8 then going through this pandemic, I really must say
9 that I can understand those that can afford to
10 homeschool making that choice.

11 It seems like, since the pandemic, we have
12 been speeding towards policies that do not stand
13 firm on medical science. This pandemic and masking
14 was started with a lie. And so it is extremely
15 difficult to trust the science that is offered.
16 When you look into and ask questions, you are made
17 to seem your education is inadequate. However,
18 most of the people making these decisions are, in
19 fact, able to read the opposition to their opinion
20 in a variety of medical papers but seem to
21 generally not want to be bothered.

22 I have a special needs child, that even
23 though I sent her to school in a face shield and
24 asked not to have a mask put on her due to

1 inability to control her saliva and subsequent
2 difficulty with lung function as a result of having
3 a wet napkin left on her face, I would have loved
4 to just keep her home but do not financially have
5 the ability to do that. So compelling those in a
6 position like mine to vaccinate or mask or stay
7 home is not really an option.

8 All right. Please consider that before
9 you vote on this rule to hand over more authority
10 to RIDOH and the director that is accurate. Please
11 stop trying to chip away at parental rights, as we
12 also want our children to be safe. Okay.

13 Also, upon reading this, you can't read it
14 at face value because you have a variety of other
15 laws. Like Title 23, Health and Safety, Chapter 1,
16 Power to Provide Rules and Regulations in Specific
17 Areas.

18 Number 11, "Provisions requiring the
19 reporting of inventories and sales of drugs,
20 devices, and other products potentially related to
21 the outbreak of diseases. All information acquired
22 under this subsection by the Department of Health
23 is confidential and not subject to public access
24 pursuant to Chapter 2 of Title 38."

1 We also have Title 23, Health and Safety.
2 Chapter 8, "Quarantine generally, consent to
3 testing and treatment, reportable communicable
4 diseases. Persons under 18 years of age" --

5 MR. GARCEAU: That's two minutes.

6 MS. SANTOS: -- "may give legal consent
7 for testing, examination, and/or treatment for any
8 reportable communicable diseases."

9 MR. GARCEAU: Sorry, that's two minutes.

10 MS. SANTOS: Why is it that we have things
11 in here that are saying that children under 18 can
12 give consent to RIDOH? Okay. And unless you're
13 actually going through this and spending all your
14 time, while you should be spending it with your
15 children and not seeing what it is that you're
16 trying to do to them, it's ridiculous. Have you
17 read it at face value? Have you read all of these?

18 MR. GARCEAU: We need to get to the next
19 person. I'm sorry.

20 MS. SANTOS: Can you answer one question.
21 Have you read this?

22 MR. GARCEAU: No, I cannot.

23 MS. SANTOS: You have not read this?

24 MR. GARCEAU: No, I cannot answer

1 questions.

2 MS. SANTOS: You have not read this paper?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He just did.

4 MS. SANTOS: You have not read the law?

5 MR. GARCEAU: I cannot --

6 MR. RIANNA: All he is is a spokesman with
7 a tie on.

8 MR. GARCEAU: Ma'am, we need to get to the
9 next person, please.

10 MS. SANTOS: Has anybody read this?
11 Because it's in there. Children under 18 can give
12 consent? Come on.

13 MR. GARCEAU: And our next speaker is
14 Crystle Welch.

15 MS. WELCH: Hi. I'm Crystle Welch. I ran
16 one of the social media pages during all of the
17 masking that was going on, and I received thousands
18 of messages from parents who were distraught. Many
19 parents, you know, didn't have the option to stay
20 home with their kids or pull their kids out of
21 school like I did. I had a five-year-old that I
22 was absolutely not going to send to school in a
23 mask.

24 And I had so many messages from parents,

1 you know, saying that their kids were suffering.
2 They had asthma, they couldn't breathe in their
3 masks. They had skin rashes on their faces. They
4 were coming home with headaches. They were
5 nauseous. They were suffering. They had anxiety,
6 depression. You know, all these rates went up
7 during this time period.

8 The brunt of this pandemic fell on the
9 backs of our kids. Everybody was not wearing
10 masks, but our kids were. And we went to our
11 school board meetings, we protested. We, you know,
12 went and spoke at our school committee meetings and
13 many committees decided to go mask choice, and then
14 Rhode Island came down and said that they had to
15 mask again.

16 Well, my school district did a -- they did
17 a survey, and when they asked the parents if they
18 wanted mask choice or not, 85 percent of the
19 parents wanted mask choice. We want to choose
20 what's best for our children. They're our
21 children. Nobody cares about them more than we do.
22 We want to keep them safe. And it's not up to the
23 State of Rhode Island to make those decisions for
24 us.

1 Our kids suffered, and I have thousands of
2 messages to back it up. There are so many more
3 parents that wanted to pull their kids out of
4 school but they couldn't. And to have a regulation
5 where you can just mask them for any -- any sort of
6 viral infection is ridiculous. It doesn't make
7 sense. There's no science behind it. So, you
8 know, I'm just asking that we do not put this
9 regulation into place. Thank you.

10 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
11 is Jackie Brousseau.

12 MS. BROUSSEAU: Hello. I was not going to
13 speak today, but after hearing everybody, I just
14 wanted to add a couple of things. I took my
15 children out of school when all of this started,
16 and I ended up homeschooling them. And honestly, I
17 should say thank you because it's the best thing I
18 ever did.

19 But I also work full-time, and I can see
20 the challenges that people have. The fact that
21 this was at nine o'clock on a weekday, I mean, I
22 made it work because this is very important to me.

23 A couple other notes I want to make -- I'm
24 not going to repeat everything everybody has said;

1 obviously, I agree -- the masks provide a false
2 sense of security. At my work, in an office,
3 people get sick, they come in, and they wear their
4 mask. And they think they're protecting everybody
5 or protecting themselves. It doesn't work. So all
6 they're doing is thinking they're protecting
7 everybody, and they're still coming in sick and
8 they're still spreading everything everywhere. It
9 doesn't change anything except create fear. That's
10 all this is doing. And that's all you're doing to
11 our kids is creating fear.

12 And my last point, why are we doing this
13 now? Like, I thought this was done. Nobody wears
14 masks anymore. Nobody. Anywhere. Why is this
15 even a thing? Why are we here? It just doesn't
16 make sense.

17 MR. GARCEAU: Our next speaker is
18 Gail Simmons.

19 MS. SIMMONS: Hi, everybody. Love you.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We all love Gail.

21 MS. SIMMONS: Everybody loves me because
22 I've got a big mouth, and I'll tell you what they
23 won't. Hi. Hi, everybody. Love you all. Hi,
24 guys. The cops know me. They tried to break my

1 thumb one time, right?

2 I've got a couple of things. I'm going to
3 keep this really short for the simple fact that
4 everybody's already said a lot of what I was going
5 to say. I pulled out a couple of signs that are
6 only like one-liners.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Use the microphone.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Use the mike.

9 MS. SIMMONS: Oh, I'm sorry. You can't
10 hear my big mouth? Everybody else does. These are
11 just basically one-liners. These are knowingly
12 causing permanent harm. Face masks, they do not
13 protect because they cause lifetime respiratory
14 disease. The fear and emotional problems they
15 cause. The suicides and family breakups these
16 things have caused because of what's happened to
17 our children.

18 Follow the money. The coronavirus funds
19 for the pocket. They've destroyed our children.
20 They fill their coffers, these people. They get
21 paid, they get the extra money in their pockets.
22 They fill their coffers. We need to hold them
23 accountable now before it's too late for our
24 children.

1 Nuremberg trial 2.0 will be coming soon.
2 All these people will be held accountable. Know
3 that crimes against humanity, there is no immunity.
4 It's in the little people, a little line in the
5 bottom of it.

6 Keep your hands off our kids. Keep your
7 mandates away from our children. Hold McKee
8 accountable. Nuremberg. You know, you guys have
9 already heard all this.

10 Okay. I'm just going to read. I only
11 wrote a little paper because I knew my big mouth
12 would get going, but I'll read it anyway.

13 Rhode Island DOH. Rhode Island again in
14 contempt of court. The bait-and-switch tactic
15 shows how corrupt Rhode Island government is.
16 Hopefully, the sealed indictments in Rhode Island
17 will be unsealed shortly, and all those who are
18 causing irreparable harm to our children will be
19 brought to justice.

20 These are crimes against humanity. Our
21 children need to be protected from the government
22 and school officials seeking extra monies from
23 kickbacks at the health risks of our children.
24 Also all our citizens. This isn't just the

1 children. They're going after mandates for all of
2 us, if you read the paperwork.

3 MR. GARCEAU: I'm sorry, that was two
4 minutes.

5 MR. RIANNA: Let her finish.

6 MS. SIMMONS: Also, I'll -- okay. Do your
7 research. We did. In today's world, the Internet
8 is available to all, and we as parents and
9 grandparents do everything we can do to protect our
10 children and do no harm. You, as elected
11 officials, are held to a higher standard. It's
12 your job to do the research. Obviously, you
13 haven't. There is no immunity. The evidence and
14 proof is out there. Crimes against humanity will
15 be coming shortly. Justice is coming, and you will
16 be held accountable. Gail.

17 MR. GARCEAU: Okay. Our next speaker is,
18 it looks like, Adam R. Muccino.

19 MR. MUCCINO: Hi. Good morning, everyone.
20 Governor McKee used the word, "reckoning,"
21 yesterday with respect to the Washington Bridge.
22 For the past hour that we've been listening to all
23 your testimony here, I think it's clear the pain,
24 the sadness that's in all of your voices. There

1 needs to be a reckoning with respect to the
2 response to the pandemic in the state of
3 Rhode Island. I wanted to make that crystal clear.

4 My children were too young at the time
5 that the Draconian masking requirements were
6 foisted upon LEAs by the State, the Department of
7 Health. They were too young at the time,
8 thankfully. And I know, in this company, that
9 might seem like I'm bragging, but I don't intend
10 that.

11 However, should, if there needs to be a
12 discussion about returning to masking children in
13 schools, I want the decision to put a mask on my
14 children's face to lie with an elected member of
15 the community, in my community. Not a state
16 bureaucrat.

17 State leaders can communicate through
18 multiple channels. They can communicate their
19 recommendations on what they wish the public to do,
20 but there should be no mandate for masks. That
21 decision should be left to parents and their
22 families. That this hearing is occurring today,
23 after the COVID-19 pandemic has long since passed,
24 is another example of how the trust between the

1 State of Rhode Island and its government has been
2 eroded.

3 That this hearing is occurring today,
4 after the State forced masking in schools via
5 executive fiat is another example of how the trust
6 between the State of Rhode Island and its people
7 have been eroded.

8 I want to conclude with this. I want to
9 conclude with this. I want to take a moment,
10 because we've been some time in here, to
11 acknowledge Attorney Greg Piccirilli and the
12 Plaintiffs in Southwell. We're here because of
13 them and their stalwart defense of your parental
14 rights. And I don't mean to speak for them, but I
15 know if it comes to pass, there's a number of you
16 in here that will do it again and again to protect
17 our children. And that's ultimately the real
18 travesty of justice here, that private citizens had
19 to take their time and money and force the State to
20 do something to follow your own policies and
21 procedures in state law is the ultimate travesty of
22 justice here. For shame.

23 You want to start earning back the trust
24 of the people of the state of Rhode Island, stop

1 this nonsense, do not push this any further, and
2 let this go. Thank you for your time.

3 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
4 we just have Gavin M.

5 GAVIN MOONEY: So today I originally
6 wasn't going to speak because --

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Louder.

8 GAVIN MOONEY: Hello, guys.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Gavin.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Start the hearing
11 over.

12 GAVIN MOONEY: Today I was not going to
13 originally speak because I have social anxiety, but
14 I decided to because masking is wrong, and it
15 should not be stood for. I was in fourth and fifth
16 grade when I was masked. We were learning about
17 American history. Very random fact, but you'll see
18 later. We were learning about freedom and the
19 freedom we stood for and how it's being violated
20 right now.

21 So just a few words to say. I caught
22 COVID around the same time as my sister,
23 Haleigh Mooney, right there. But it was a bad
24 time. But just let this go. This should not be

1 stood for. It should never be stood for. Masks do
2 not help anything. They never did, they never
3 will. Give us freedom.

4 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
5 is Mike Stenhouse.

6 MR. STENHOUSE: As many of you know, I run
7 a video podcast, In the Dugout, that I've had
8 parents, medical professionals, psychologists,
9 doctors, lawyers, students, on my show. What I
10 never had on my show, until last week, was an air
11 quality engineer from Pennsylvania who's certified
12 to go into workspaces and measure the quality of
13 the air, you know, construction sites, sewers,
14 places like that.

15 He put the monitor under the mask and
16 within 20 to 30 seconds the alarms go off
17 signifying unacceptable levels, too low levels of
18 oxygen, too high levels of carbon dioxide. I said,
19 what the Occupational Safety and Health
20 Administration, the federal agency, do if you found
21 those levels of toxic air in a workplace? He said,
22 we would shut down that work site immediately. We
23 wouldn't let workers work in there for 20 minutes.
24 Yet you force kids to breathe that toxic air for

1 six, seven, eight hours a day. Do you care? Did
2 you do any research on your own? As someone said
3 earlier, do your work. Thank you.

4 MS. SIMMONS: Just so you know, I've got
5 all kinds of research you can look at after if you
6 want to.

7 MS. LeCLAIRE: Hello. I would like to
8 call the next speaker. It looks like Ken Atkinson.

9 MR. ATKINSON: Hi. Some of you may know
10 me as Ken Richards on Facebook. I'm here to
11 testify that there is zero proof, zero, that the
12 mask mandate on children did anything to help make
13 our children but -- anything but mentally worse.
14 There's no real science. It's all over the real
15 news channels and news feeds and whatever else.
16 Not MSDNC or Clinton's CNN.

17 Children were the least affected. You
18 know this, the CDC knows this, the World Health
19 Organization knows this. You know what's a
20 problem? Our southern border. We don't know who's
21 crossing that southern border. We don't know what
22 these people have.

23 Right now, there's a problem in Chicago
24 with the measles. Don't give me this crap that

1 everybody's being checked in at -- we know what's
2 coming in over the border. What are we waiting
3 for, a measles outbreak? Because I certainly think
4 that the Rhode Island Department of Health and the
5 CDC are hoping for some sort of health outbreak so
6 that they can play and screw around with this
7 year's 2024 election. Am I right? Does anybody in
8 this room agree that something big is going to
9 happen before now and October, that they're going
10 to screw with us?

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Guaranteed.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It could be the
13 aliens.

14 MR. STENHOUSE: We are done for this.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The election virus.

16 MR. STENHOUSE: No more masking of the
17 children. We're way past this at this point.
18 Somebody wants to wear a mask, fine. You want to
19 throw it out there for all of us to use our own
20 opinion. I worked in the emergency room at
21 Rhode Island Hospital, Kent County Hospital. I
22 worked in the trauma rooms. I know when I'm
23 supposed to put a mask on with the VREs.

24 And I'm sorry that this dude, over here

1 sitting on the second seat, we were bothering him
2 because it doesn't look like he wants to be here.
3 He'd rather be getting a root canal. That's my
4 piece. Thank you everybody for showing up today.
5 You did one hell of a job.

6 MS. LeCLAIRE: Thank you. I'd like to
7 call the next speaker. It's Katrina Moorey.

8 MS. MOONEY: Hi. I first wanted to thank
9 everybody for being here today. We really
10 appreciate all the support. This is great seeing
11 everyone. My name is Katrina Mooney. I've been a
12 Rhode Island resident all of my life.

13 I just want to say that you have
14 completely destroyed my trust in the State of
15 Rhode Island and the Department of Health.
16 Interventions with no proven benefit cannot be
17 recommended until the absence of harm is
18 demonstrated. The benefits should always outweigh
19 the harms. And the burden of proof lies with the
20 body trying to impose the intervention, you.

21 To date, there is no mask study showing
22 these masks our children wore were effective
23 against COVID-19. We're not even talking about
24 isolation-type room-type masks, which are properly

1 fitted, you can't have a beard, this and that.
2 We're talking about these cheap, flimsy cloths that
3 we bought at Amazon for like 50 cents each, the
4 cheapest we could get because we had to buy them.

5 Rhode Island Department of Health's mask
6 mandate hurt our children. I saw it firsthand with
7 my children. Forced masking impeded communication.
8 My son, who spoke earlier, still has trouble
9 enunciating some words and making certain sounds
10 completely because, as one of the other teachers or
11 educators said, you can't make that, "th-th." You
12 have to see the mouth making those sounds.
13 Teachers know that. Ask the teachers.

14 They affected socialization, education,
15 connection. Again, these children, connection,
16 that's what's important. It's not just education,
17 but it's connecting in schools with friends. They
18 weren't able to do this. They weren't able to sit
19 with friends and talk.

20 It affected their breathing. They were
21 getting headaches. It affected language
22 acquisition. Additionally, there were skin issues.
23 My son had infections on his face, around his nose
24 and his mouth multiple times, that we had to go to

1 the pediatrician for. And since the masks have
2 come off, he has not had one infection. Surprise,
3 surprise.

4 They led to dental problems as well. Our
5 pediatric dentist told us that they've seen more
6 cavities and tooth decay. And maybe most
7 significantly, the mental health concerns that
8 result from the mask usage. We're in a mental
9 health crisis because of you and your mandates.
10 You do know that. The mental health is important.

11 You need to live with that. You need to
12 know that and live with that and change this. Stop
13 this nonsense and oppose mandates which harm our
14 children. They're our children. Not yours. Thank
15 you.

16 MS. LeCLAIRE: At this point, I believe
17 that everybody that signed up to provide public
18 testimony has provided testimony. I'm sorry.
19 Thank you.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Why were we limited
21 to two minutes? Why were we limited to two
22 minutes?

23 MS. CIRIGNOTTA: We have some people who
24 say they signed up and they haven't been called yet.

1 MS. LeCLAIRE: Okay. Non-Plaintiffs,
2 right? Because they're --

3 MS. CIRIGNOTTA: Non-Plaintiffs, correct?

4 MS. LeCLAIRE: Non-Plaintiffs are in a
5 different category.

6 MS. CIRIGNOTTA: We have several who just
7 raised their hand, and they're not listed.

8 MS. LeCLAIRE: All right.

9 MS. HALL: I was in transit. I apologize.
10 Number 7.

11 MS. LeCLAIRE: Oh, all right. I forgot
12 you were in transit. I apologize.

13 MS. HALL: That's okay.

14 (AUDIO FEEDBACK)

15 MS. LeCLAIRE: What I'm trying to --

16 MS. HALL: I don't know how to work that.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Put your hand on
18 the mike.

19 MS. HALL: Hello.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Or hold it.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hold it.

22 MS. HALL: Maybe I'll just hold it. Hi,
23 my name is Jen. That's okay. My name is Jen Hall.
24 I'm from Johnston. And I was in transit because

1 the timing of this was a little inconvenient.

2 Anyway, I won't repeat much of what we've
3 heard today because we all have very similar
4 stories. I'm just going to share mine and then
5 just my opinion and my request.

6 My husband and I have two children.
7 They're ages six and eight. My six-year-old has
8 special needs, with a significant speech delay.
9 Age three to six is the formative years to work
10 one-on-one with a speech therapist. He did not
11 have that opportunity.

12 I brought him to his first and his last
13 day of preschool. At the end, when I picked him
14 up, they said, Mrs. Hall, we noticed that you
15 didn't put cute little masks in his cute little
16 backpack. Excuse me, he's three. Well, it's the
17 hope that he works his way up to tolerating it for
18 the full day. No.

19 So he was not able to go to preschool. He
20 was also not able to attend preK, and his speech
21 got worse and worse. I did homeschool my
22 eight-year-old, and I loved it. We just stopped
23 this last December. It was such a joy. I can't
24 homeschool him. I'm not a special educator, and I

1 didn't have access to one, because even with
2 walk-in services as a homeschooler, he was required
3 to wear a mask.

4 He has sensory, he has behavioral
5 problems, and it was just mind-blowing to me.
6 Because there are parents who chose not to
7 vaccinate their children in order for them to
8 attend, and RIDOH has a form. It's a religious
9 exemption form. And parents can use that so their
10 children can have religious freedom. Well,
11 freedom. But for some reason, they would not
12 accept my doctor's note saying he cannot, due to
13 health reasons and behavioral reasons and sensory
14 reasons. They would not take a note for him to
15 attend school. And that was unfortunate because he
16 definitely missed out.

17 He is now in school, and he is getting the
18 services he needs; however, they do know -- he has
19 a significant delay. We talk about that, "T-H," he
20 can't master that. He may not master that for a
21 few more years.

22 I can't imagine ever putting a mask on my
23 child just so he can attend school. I know parents
24 had to do it, and I feel terrible. I'm hearing

1 stories that they were in gym and recess and in the
2 heat with these masks. I feel terrible. I was
3 lucky to homeschool a little bit and obviously,
4 more so my daughter, but he's in school now, and
5 I'm glad the masks are off.

6 The impact of time missed for my son's
7 education in speech therapy is immense, and now he
8 has to work more hard than he ever has had to. He
9 is set to repeat first grade because of this.

10 This morning, I read an article in a
11 medical journal that was from a Harvard bio -- I'm
12 going to say this right, I'm sorry -- a Harvard
13 biostatistician and epidemiologist. He states that
14 the COVID lockdown, school closures, and mask
15 mandates interrupted children's education. It has
16 disadvantaged them for life, and I believe it.

17 So that is why I am here to hopefully
18 oppose this mask mandate ever coming back because
19 it's a medical decision, and I don't co-parent with
20 the government, RIDOH, or RIDE, or anyone. Thank
21 you.

22 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And is there
23 anybody -- actually, yes, is there anybody here who
24 has not had an opportunity to speak who would like

1 to do so? Okay.

2 MR. ROMBLAD: Right here.

3 MR. GARCEAU: Okay.

4 MR. ROMBLAD: Right here. You cut me off
5 after a minute.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Let him finish.

7 MR. RIANNA: Give him time.

8 MR. GARCEAU: Sir, actually, we are going
9 to be putting the sign-in sheet. They'll be
10 sending that around, and then we can have anybody
11 who has not had an opportunity or who would like to
12 speak for extra time, we can certainly do that.

13 MS. JENNINGS: Why don't I speak first
14 because I already signed in.

15 MR. GARCEAU: Okay. Yes. Yes, if you'd
16 like to speak, you can come up.

17 MS. JENNINGS: Hi. I'm Debbie Jennings.
18 Can you hear me okay?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

20 MS. JENNINGS: No? Okay. I'm from
21 Health Choice Rhode Island. I have to say, in the
22 very beginning of this, in January 2020, I could
23 intuit what was going to happen. And it just
24 started rolling out as a nightmare to me. And I

1 just saw that all the western countries were in
2 lockstep with one another, and it started filtering
3 down to other Third World countries, which we're
4 rapidly becoming if we can't turn this ship around.

5 I am a nurse. I knew from the get-go that
6 masks are not effective for respiratory or at least
7 infectious diseases. The N95s and the -- what are
8 they, the P2s or the P1s? P2s, yeah. I was fitted
9 as a nurse with a tuberculin one. That's a tight
10 fit. That's for bacteria. Tuberculosis is a
11 bacteria, which is hundreds of times bigger than a
12 virus.

13 So all I can say is that we're in very,
14 very dangerous territory right now. What happened
15 to our children, what has happened to this whole
16 society, how they've infiltrated every aspect of
17 our life, and it all came from the top,
18 World Health Organization down to the respective
19 bodies within the countries and the states. A big
20 echo chamber and just casting fear into everybody's
21 hearts. It was only the strongest that could fight
22 back, and many have fought back and use the
23 legislative body, which virtually did nothing for
24 us. They were captured by it and didn't do

1 anything last year when we petitioned them.

2 And I was involved with the election
3 integrity movement, in the hopes we can move it
4 through that way, that we could change the
5 structure of how we're voting because that all got
6 changed in 2020.

7 And right now, we're looking at the
8 World Health Organization wanting to take control
9 of your department, of the whole state, of -- all
10 over, all over the world to have a one size fits
11 all. And it's all based upon this new messenger
12 RNA delivery system.

13 And I know, with these masks, that was one
14 of the worst aspects of what happened.

15 (AUDIO FEEDBACK)

16 MS. JENNINGS: That's just touching this
17 thing.

18 To our children. I mean, it just broke my
19 heart. I don't have grandkids in the school, but I
20 just knew it was so wrong. And to have these
21 legislative people and these teachers, like,
22 parading around. I remember Stacey Abrams with a
23 whole host of children behind her. She's not
24 masked, but they're all masked. It's just

1 reprehensible what we've been through.

2 We have to turn this around. We have to
3 go toward the healing arts. It's not a one size
4 fits all. We have to integrate compassion, new
5 vitality, and new vision into how we are going to
6 go forward and declare -- we already have the
7 template; it's the U.S. Constitution. And the
8 Rhode Island Constitution is pretty fine, too. So
9 we already know what we have to do, and that whole
10 thing just needs to be brought out to the whole
11 world. It's all there. Our forefathers gave it to
12 us. So that's -- that's about what I want to say
13 about it. We can't do this again.

14 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And the next
15 speaker is Jess Murray.

16 MS. MURRAY: All right. Good morning,
17 everybody. First, I would like to say, I know
18 probably a few other people said it, this is a
19 hearing for masking for children. Parents,
20 guardians, usually drop off their kids between
21 8:15 and 8:45. This meeting is at nine. I just
22 made it just in the nick of time. So maybe
23 thinking about something like this being a little
24 later in the day so it's convenient for parents to

1 actually have a voice for their children.

2 As a healthcare professional, we are
3 supposed to be wearing masks and changing them in
4 and out of every patient's room. We're not doing
5 that. So to ask a child to wear a mask all day
6 long is not feasible. They're going to get dirty,
7 they're going to get respiratory infections, and we
8 seen that during the pandemic. More respiratory
9 infections were happening because of that.

10 Let's not pretend that children don't need
11 to build up an immunity. They need that. These
12 children are going to grow up, 25, 30 years old,
13 and they're not going to be able to fight
14 infections. God forbid if someone gets cancer, any
15 cold, anything they're going to have a hard time.
16 So I think you guys really need to think about the
17 negative effects. There's more negative effects
18 than positive. So unless we're going to change
19 these masks every 15 minutes, it's not going to
20 work.

21 I suggest we bring back janitors because I
22 know we decided that it was too costly to have
23 janitors in the schools wiping things down. Let's
24 bring them back, have them constantly wiping down

1 surfaces, and get kids to have their hands washed.
2 Handwashing stops the spread. Right? We all know
3 that, right? I know they're taught to wash their
4 hands. It's first thing you're taught. To stop
5 the spread, you wash your hands. Very simple.

6 Children need to breathe. Never mind
7 children who have disabilities and need to see
8 someone's mouth for communication. So, again, I
9 think you guys need to seriously think about the
10 negative effects of this masking. Thank you.

11 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And our next
12 speaker is Cherie Waluk.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She already spoke.

14 MR. GARCEAU: Oh, yes. Well, she had
15 signed up to speak a second time, so.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's here. She's
17 in the bathroom. She'll be right out.

18 MR. GARCEAU: And Tara Mellow.

19 MS. MELLOW: I already spoke, but I would
20 love to speak again.

21 MR. GARCEAU: Yeah, I have you on here
22 twice so I didn't know if you wanted to --

23 MS. MELLOW: It's a crime. We need to
24 never do it again. Ever.

1 MR. GARCEAU: And Jennifer Hall.

2 MS. HALL: Jennifer Hall, I already spoke.

3 MR. GARCEAU: Oh, okay. Yeah, I have you
4 on here twice as well. All right. Jason Romblad.

5 MR. ROMBLAD: Director Garceau, you are
6 the wrong person to hold this hearing. You are not
7 here to listen to us. You are here to silence us.

8 Good morning. My name Jason Romblad. I
9 am an unaffiliated voter from Woonsocket. I am
10 here today to vehemently oppose the school masking
11 proposal that the Rhode Island Department of Health
12 is proposing today.

13 I want to point out that school masking
14 started during COVID-era lockdowns using executive
15 orders and supposed emergency powers. There were
16 no studies used as reference when issuing these
17 mandates, and there were no studies conducted in
18 this state regarding the effects on the children
19 being forced to inhale their own carbon dioxide for
20 hours at a time.

21 The uncleanliness of these masks over time
22 are detrimental to the health of the human body,
23 inhibiting the flow of fresh air and oxygen.
24 Nearly all masks worn will not stop a virus, and

1 states exactly that on the packaging.

2 To issue these authoritative mandates with
3 no follow-up studies is negligent and, quite
4 frankly, should be criminal. To this day, not one
5 person under the age of 18 has died from COVID in
6 Rhode Island. This is direct information from the
7 Rhode Island Department of Health COVID portal.

8 To force masks on healthy children, who
9 have no risk of dying from a virus, is inhumane.
10 The same people who issued these mask mandates in
11 Rhode Island, including this agency, the
12 Department of Health, allowed masks to be removed
13 in restaurants while sitting and consuming food and
14 beverages. Do you expect us to believe that we are
15 safe from catching a virus while we are sitting but
16 not while we are standing? How absurd and
17 insulting.

18 I am still shocked today that the general
19 public fell for this hoax and that the Rhode Island
20 Legislature allowed the dictators, the governor, to
21 rule for so long with supposed emergency powers.
22 These same people, including this agency, the
23 Department of Health, eventually allowed masks to
24 be removed at retail locations if Plexiglas was

1 installed at the cash registers. Ignoring the fact
2 that a virus will go around the Plexiglas. The
3 lack of science, when issuing these mandates, is
4 astounding.

5 We are here today to discuss school
6 masking, but let's make it clear, this was just one
7 tool used to propagate the greatest medical hoax in
8 world history -- COVID. Big Pharma spends hundreds
9 of millions, if not billions, to push their
10 products, and that is exactly what these rules and
11 mandates were. A ruse to instill fear in the
12 general public in order to convince them to take an
13 experimental shot.

14 This agency, the Rhode Island Department
15 of Health, often referred to using the guidance of
16 the CDC, FDA, and NIH. They called for a six-foot
17 social distancing rule, which closed many schools,
18 setting many children back in their studies. Just
19 recently, Anthony Fauci testified that this rule
20 was, quote, likely not based on scientific data,
21 end quote. In layman's terms, they lied.

22 With such an egregious admission, how are
23 we to believe any of their recommendations. This
24 agency, the Rhode Island Department of Health,

1 followed along blindly with the recommendations of
2 these agencies who are heavily intertwined with
3 Big Pharma. Many top officials at the FDA, CDC,
4 and NIH have previously worked for the same
5 pharmaceutical company who are producing the COVID
6 shots being pushed and vice versa. They also
7 collect royalties from these same pharmaceutical
8 companies. Moderna announced last year that they
9 alone paid the NIH 400 million in royalties.
10 Probably to the same people that approved their
11 shots.

12 COVID has more than a 99 percent survival
13 rate, and there are over-the-counter medications
14 that work against it. For that reason alone, the
15 emergency use authorization for the COVID shot was
16 both unnecessary and illegal. These shots are not
17 safe and effective and have many adverse reactions,
18 including death. This information was provided in
19 the Pfizer clinical trials, which they tried to get
20 sealed for 75 years.

21 This Rhode Island Department of Health
22 sent letters to our medical professionals
23 threatening that they would lose their medical
24 licenses if they spoke out against these lies.

1 This state government also forced many to take
2 these shots and terminated employment to many
3 health professionals that did not comply. This is
4 in direct violation of the Nuremberg Code, and
5 people should be held liable.

6 You should all be ashamed of yourself for
7 this agency that resorted to fear, intimidation,
8 and control tactics. So in closing, I, again,
9 state that I vehemently oppose the school masking
10 regulations. Thanks.

11 MR. GARCEAU: And our next speaker is
12 Pat Ford.

13 MR. FORD: Thanks for the second shot. I
14 got a little emotional before. I'm a civil
15 libertarian. When I see people out here showing up
16 like all of you did, as you did at the protest, as
17 you did at the hearings, as you did at the
18 State House, as you did for your children, it warms
19 my heart.

20 A public service announcement, I just want
21 to make sure, something seems to be missing here.
22 For anybody here supporting children's masking, I
23 want to make sure you get a shot. Does anybody
24 here support? Anyone? Bueller? Bueller? There

1 doesn't seem to be a single person here at a public
2 hearing that we, the folks surrounding the parents'
3 movement and folks like Mike Stenhouse and myself
4 spent the last month advertising.

5 We worked night and day, all of you, to
6 make sure that the general public knew about this,
7 and yet not one single person here came to support
8 your seemingly Messianic complex about making sure
9 that we mask. No one. Isn't that the ultimate
10 testament. For all of the people that tried to
11 shame these folks, for all the people that cost
12 them their employment. Where is the governor?
13 Where is the governor's office? I seem to be
14 missing him. Here's a guy who will attend the
15 opening of an envelope, but he's not here today.

16 Where is Dr. Scott? The all-present,
17 omnipotent, impotent force behind the Department of
18 Health. As I said, listening one night at
19 eleven o'clock in Providence at WaterFire the voice
20 said, "masks work." Do masks work?

21 AUDIENCE: No.

22 MR. FORD: I don't see anyone here to
23 testify they do. I know later on today you'll have
24 the public, once the public is gone, you'll have

1 the opportunity to have the experts weigh in. And
2 they'll say, I can't believe these heathens out
3 here defending their children. Get used to it.

4 Today is proof evident -- proof positive
5 that months -- really in case years, after, if you
6 will, the true collapse of the pandemic, which
7 happened somewhere around what, '21? '21. Not
8 '22, not '23, certainly not '24. The fact that, on
9 a Friday morning at nine o'clock in the morning,
10 these folks were willing to come, often -- and
11 clearly spending hours and hours and countless
12 hours developing the documentation to testify
13 today, more hours I'll say than anyone -- having
14 attended literally every single hearing myself of
15 the Southwell v. McKee. Southwell is in the
16 courtroom, right. These folks spent more time
17 doing the research than your people did. All your
18 people did for three years was obscure, obfuscate,
19 and get in the way of the court system of the State
20 of Rhode Island. I would show up for hearings, and
21 it was all about mechanics and delays.

22 What are you ashamed of? What is the
23 governor ashamed of? Where is Dr. Scott? She was
24 run out of town because it was clear early on to

1 the folks in charge that hers was just a gigantic
2 vanity play meant to promote herself personally at
3 the cost of the people in this room, the children
4 in this room, and the children across the state,
5 who, well, had to work at nine o'clock in the
6 morning, didn't have the opportunity to take the
7 hours off or make the sacrifice that these folks
8 did. So you should be ashamed. You denied people
9 functional civil liberties. You took away people's
10 opportunity to make a living.

11 A saying came up during the protest, "From
12 hero to zero." And that's how a lot of the medical
13 workers in this room felt. They literally put
14 themselves on the line, by the definition of the
15 State. The State was the one that spent
16 overtime -- Governor Gina Raimondo spent countless
17 hours of press conferences I attended, making sure
18 that people were terrorized by the onset of this
19 illness. Where are they now? Sleep tight,
20 Rhode Island.

21 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
22 is Gail Simmons.

23 MS. SIMMONS: Thank you. Glad to see you
24 all again. I love you all dearly. I pray I lift

1 you all up to the Lord.

2 I wanted to say, after I was rushed trying
3 to get everything through, I missed the first part
4 because I had other things and so I didn't want to
5 repeat everything so I couldn't read all my signs,
6 but I did bring two things that I just wanted to
7 show you that had to do with it.

8 But first I want to tell you about one of
9 my grandchildren. My daughter-in-law, who did not
10 want to use a vaccine, was forced to give one of my
11 grandsons a vaccine. For those of us who know,
12 they're deadly. The masks, one of my grandsons has
13 a lisp. He has trouble talking. It interfered
14 with that. It gave him a lot of respiratory. They
15 all have these asthmatic problems, and they were
16 forced to wear the masks.

17 So one grandson, he had to go see a
18 psychiatrist, a counselor because of the stress.
19 Because the teachers in the schools were telling
20 all the children, those kids that don't want to
21 wear masks, they're trying to kill you. They're
22 going to kill you because you're not -- you're
23 bringing all that stuff in.

24 He had to go -- the doctor, his doctor,

1 who he's had since little, said you have to get him
2 a vaccine. He is so afraid he is going to die just
3 to be in a room with somebody. He had to get the
4 vaccine. It breaks my heart.

5 We all know, those of us that did the
6 research, we know -- I've got lists. If anybody
7 doesn't know, anybody didn't do their research, I
8 have all these papers. They're all listed, all the
9 things that we knew before this even started, that
10 they kept from you, and you were too busy working
11 and taking care of your homes to be able to do the
12 research. But they were supposed to do the
13 research. I've got them. I'll take them out there
14 if anybody wants to take pictures. You can look it
15 all up. It was all known way ahead of time. It
16 was all preplanned pandemic. Everything is there.
17 I've got it all listed out. They're a little
18 battered. I've been on the streets for years with
19 these things.

20 Back to my grandson. He is still in
21 counseling, all three of those, because of the
22 stress they went through. Do you all realize what
23 you've done to these generations? These kids will
24 have the fear in them for their whole life. They

1 never got to be real children. They never got to
2 be -- I'm in my 70s. They never got to just have
3 the joy of being out and breathing and everything
4 else just to know freedom.

5 These kids have been terrorized because
6 they've been afraid. Afraid somebody next to them
7 might cough. Oh, no, I'm going to die. I'm going
8 to die. That's how bad one of my grandsons got.
9 If somebody coughed in a room, he had to go into a
10 panic attack because he was so afraid that he was
11 going to die. This is what you people did to our
12 children.

13 This whole world is going through this
14 whole thing. All these next generations coming up,
15 they've been terrorized. They never had the chance
16 to be children because they're too afraid because
17 of you. I get very upset about that, as you can
18 tell.

19 There's one thing people were talking
20 about during this time about the masks. And they
21 were worried. The governor was worried about the
22 23 percent of the people who might sue because the
23 kids didn't have masks on. Well, guess what, wait
24 until the 77 percent sue for the damages the masks

1 have done. There was a loss of 15 to 20 percent of
2 immunity just in six months of wearing those masks.
3 That's what you did to our kids, our children, our
4 kids, our grandchildren.

5 There's something I learned -- I wasn't
6 from Rhode Island originally. This moment I'm just
7 taking to ask a favor of each and every one of you,
8 especially people who love the Lord. I found out
9 that -- God told me back in October, he said, start
10 researching Roger Williams. He told me research
11 the Independent Man. Okay. I made this short so I
12 wouldn't be too long.

13 Unity, one accord. Let us work and pray
14 together. Pray that God will forgive the iniquity
15 of the Rhode Island government. They removed God
16 and then replaced him with a golden calf.

17 There was supposed to be hope for
18 Rhode Island on that State House. They said, oh,
19 you wouldn't recognize the hat and the pantaloons
20 and the jacket. So they let the guy, the
21 architect, build a Greek God. And then the
22 jewelers in Rhode Island decided, well, we want to
23 guild it. So they took the hope and miracle God
24 made for Rhode Island off the thrown of the State

1 House, and they put the Independent Man up there.
2 That's self. That's what all these people, self.
3 It's not about them. It's not about our kids.
4 It's not about you. It's about them and what they
5 can stick in their back pockets.

6 They removed God and then replaced him
7 with a golden calf. Self, the Independent Man.
8 One reporter from the Providence Journal changed
9 God's hope to self, and Rhode Island has been known
10 as the Independent Man throughout the earth ever
11 since.

12 That's taking God off. Remember Baal
13 worship and, you know, Moses, those stories? It's
14 time to repent. Repent for all the evil for our
15 children's sake. Stand in the gap for all the
16 iniquity. We are warriors.

17 I'm just calling all of you to pray for
18 these people, for our government, for the iniquity
19 they have done so God can forgive this land because
20 iniquity isn't just a regular sin. Iniquity is
21 what can only be forgiven by God. You've got to
22 get on your face, you've got to pray for these
23 people. Because they won't stand in the gap. So
24 we have to pray to cleanse that iniquity so we're

1 free and God can bless Rhode Island again. I love
2 you all, and I pray for you all every day.

3 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And we have one
4 other speaker, Lori Reis-Brooks.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I signed up as well.

6 MS. CIRIGNOTTA: You also had called
7 Cherie Waluk, but she was in the bathroom.

8 MS. REIS-BROOKS: I really wasn't going to
9 speak today. I didn't plan on it. I'm from
10 Tiverton, and I've sat here, and I've watched you
11 three up here, and I can see that it takes a person
12 like you all that don't have a soul.

13 I learned of the medical tyranny back in
14 2011 when my 24-month-old was diagnosed with cancer
15 after vaccine. He's now died because of that
16 treatment. My daughter was three weeks old when
17 that happened. I pulled her out of school in
18 Fall River when this pandemic went on. She never
19 saw the rest of her class again in second grade.

20 I homeschooled her for two years. We
21 moved to Tiverton. I said you can go back to
22 school in fifth grade. So now she's there in sixth
23 grade, two years now. I will not mask her. That's
24 why I took her out. You have to have no soul to

1 even sit here and consider this.

2 Now she's going through the grief of my
3 stepson, who's been in my life since he was two
4 years old because he died suddenly because the
5 money that goes into the pockets of the doctor
6 vaccinated him without me or his father's
7 permission.

8 As someone else said, they all should be
9 ashamed of themselves. And I hope, I really hope
10 you're willing to look yourselves in the mirror
11 each and every night if you decide to do this. I'm
12 going to try to pray for you for the last woman
13 because you will have the blood of Jesus Christ all
14 over you. And you do right now. So I hope you do
15 the right thing. Because if something happens to
16 my daughter for pulling her out of school because
17 you want to mask her up for your money, hell will
18 be paid. Thank you.

19 MR. GARCEAU: And the next speaker we have
20 is Tracy Tellier.

21 MS. TELLIER: Hi there. I just wanted to
22 come up one more time and let you know this. You
23 folks will never -- I'm speaking. Eyes, right
24 here. You, eyes -- you will never, ever, ever --

1 you can give me the side-eye all the you want,
2 buddy, but I'm speaking -- you will never be
3 allowed to abuse my children ever again. You do
4 this, I will pull my kids out of school so fast.
5 You want the money. You want kids in school. I
6 will pull my kids out of school. All right.

7 And you know what the good thing about
8 this, the flip, if we can even say there's one good
9 thing, you've emboldened a whole generation of kids
10 who aren't going to take your nonsense. Who aren't
11 going to take your stupid mandates. Aren't going
12 to take your stupid poison vaccine. Aren't going
13 to take your stupid, filthy face diapers. They're
14 not going to take all of it.

15 And you, sir, you have no goddamn courage.
16 You want to know why? Because you still can't look
17 me in the eye. You're a coward. All of you are
18 cowards, and you should be ashamed. Shameful. You
19 know what, adults are not -- children are not
20 shields for adults, and that's what you people did.
21 Shameful.

22 MR. GARCEAU: And we also have
23 Cherie Walluck.

24 MS. WALLUCK: All righty. Whoa, that was

1 something. It's powerful in this room because
2 there's a lot of us that are upset. We feel anger.
3 We feel sadness. We feel compassion. We feel all
4 the feels. I mean, the kids, do the kids not make
5 you want to cry? We're hearing it from them. And
6 I think that was kind of my question I didn't get
7 to ask you guys we were so rushed in two minutes.
8 I think we ought to have five minutes and been
9 okay.

10 You know, the question is, will there be a
11 comprehensive benefit/risk analysis which includes
12 children in schools? You know, from elementary,
13 middle school, high school. Those are real
14 questions. Those are real psychological -- there's
15 been a psychological impact. I know there are
16 surveys that come out from our Portsmouth district.
17 You know, we have a really good superintendent. We
18 were going to go mask choice. He was -- you know,
19 we had a huge showing at your school committee
20 meeting, and then the mandate came down from the
21 top. I think that's where you lost a lot of us.

22 We are the parents. We're the experts on
23 our children. You call yourself experts on public
24 health. Okay. But we are the experts on our

1 children's health. And like I spoke of before, you
2 don't know the things that kids are going through
3 at home, the depression, the growth. I mean, the
4 hormones of middle schoolers. I'm a mother here
5 speaking to you as a mother. Like, you cannot
6 impose a regulation that would be a blanket mandate
7 for all of these schools and not expect, you know,
8 a psychological impact.

9 The suicide rates, the eating disorders,
10 you know, children with disabilities. Will there
11 be exemptions, exceptions to the rule? Maybe some
12 kids can't wear a face mask. I mean, I just don't
13 understand four years later.

14 We've seen the impacts. This shouldn't
15 even be a question. It should be banned and barred
16 from ever happening on a long-term basis. I mean,
17 we didn't -- we're not talking one year. This went
18 beyond one year in schools. Do you know how long
19 that is in the life of kids? I hope you guys have
20 children and really put your hearts there.

21 I don't know if it comes down to the four
22 of you sitting here on this panel to make this
23 decision. And I don't think it's fair to take out
24 all our anger on you guys. However, I do

1 understand all the anger because I feel it. I
2 almost couldn't write about it because it's such
3 PTSD and trauma because our kids are something we
4 want to protect with our whole being, our whole
5 selves, and our kids were made to protect adults.
6 Teachers came down from the unions, Rhode Island
7 Department of Health, the governor. We lived it,
8 we saw it, and nobody was talking to us. I saw it
9 with my kids.

10 So I think this is our chance to tell you
11 guys -- again, I'm going to speak from the heart
12 because that's who I am, and that's what I go by.
13 Some are going to speak from anger because we all
14 have it, and it's real.

15 I thank you for sitting here because we
16 haven't had this, you know, area where we can
17 actually speak about it, except for to each other
18 on social media or when we get in groups together.
19 I mean, this is four years. I made lifelong
20 friends because we are going to fight for our kids
21 first, and we have to find a way to not let this
22 happen. And it happened, and we're just asking for
23 it to not happen again. Thank you.

24 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And we would

1 just like to thank everybody for speaking and --

2 MR. RIANNA: Can I say one more thing.

3 MR. GARCEAU: Just one moment actually.

4 MR. RIANNA: Thank you. My name is
5 Paul Rianna, Jr. This is the second time. I
6 forgot to say a couple of things. I'll try to keep
7 it more professional and a little more normal.

8 MR. PICCIRILLI: Paul.

9 MR. RIANNA: Yes. I can't finish?
10 Everyone else had a second try, but I can't?

11 MR. PICCIRILLI: Just hear me out. The
12 parents were supposed to start at eleven.

13 MR. RIANNA: Okay. So can I finish what I
14 got to say? All I said is it's going to be quick.

15 MR. PICCIRILLI: You can come back after.
16 I'm saying you can come back after.

17 MR. RIANNA: Just let me just finish what
18 I got to say. I don't understand everyone else got
19 a second chance.

20 MR. PICCIRILLI: Paul, I'm on your side,
21 remember.

22 MR. RIANNA: I understand. I'm just
23 saying. This will be quick, I promise. We, the
24 people in this room, shouldn't be standing in front

1 of yous. Governor Dan McKee should be sitting
2 there, Dr. McDonald should be sitting there,
3 Alexander-Scott should be sitting there, the people
4 who came down with these decisions should be
5 sitting there.

6 I lost my job for two years. A lot of
7 people in this room lost their job longer than
8 that. I still can't work in healthcare. I am
9 vilified. Not one nursing home will hire me, not
10 one hospital will hire me.

11 I got my job back at Fatima Hospital. I
12 got fired within three months to make an example
13 out of me for protesting in front of
14 Fatima Hospital. And do you know who brought down
15 that decision? The Attorney General, Peter Neronha,
16 which I have a recording, tried to investigate me
17 when the Department of Health cleared me of the
18 charges I was accused of.

19 So when Fatima cleared me, they put me
20 back on the floor. Then the Attorney General sends
21 a letter over, fire him. So I got fired again for
22 speaking with everybody in this room, for speaking
23 against the vaccine mandates. I was politically
24 targeted. For fighting against masking children, I

1 was politically targeted. And for what?

2 Yous are all sitting in here. All these
3 intelligent parents showed the data, and yous are
4 wrong, and you still politically target us. We
5 held rallies in front of city hall. We shut down
6 Providence. We shut down the WaterFire. All
7 because we are parents and we know what our
8 children need. We know what our children want.
9 And we will not take you tyrants ruining our
10 children's lives.

11 My son's 22 years old. Thank God I don't
12 have to deal with this, but I feel for everyone in
13 this room. And it's sad to see that -- how
14 heartbreaking it for these children to come up here
15 and speak and literally walk away in tears from the
16 mental trauma that it caused on them.

17 I believe the next time this happens it's
18 not going to be so peaceful. We're fed up. We're
19 tired. We're done.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. That's
21 enough.

22 MR. RIANNA: Thank you. Hold on. Hold
23 on. Did you say that to anyone else when they
24 spoke? You didn't.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This is about
2 school masks. All right. We've been very patient.

3 MR. RIANNA: It doesn't intertwine?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Enough.

5 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And we would
6 just like to thank you all for joining us today.
7 Your input is very much appreciated. And at this
8 time, we are actually just going to take a very
9 brief, five-minute break, and then we will begin
10 the next portion of the hearing. Thank you.

11 (Break taken)

12 MR. GARCEAU: All right. I just want to
13 let everybody know we are going to be beginning the
14 next portion of our hearing. So we are going to
15 have the Plaintiffs speak now. They will have one
16 hour for their testimony. So the first speaker we
17 have is Carolyn Moretti.

18 MS. MORETTI: Hi. I was hesitant to
19 speak, but I figured --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Turn it on.

21 MR. GARCEAU: Sorry it was turned off.

22 MS. MORETTI: I was hesitant to speak, but
23 everyone was doing such a good job and standing up
24 for the cause. I think there really has to be an

1 end put to this and data collected. Give us your
2 data that tells us that this is not harmful to our
3 kids.

4 Our lawsuit showed that there was
5 irreparable harm done to the kids. How can you
6 move any further in continuing this on if harm is
7 being done to them? And I agree, you need to be
8 held accountable to that. Until you can tell us
9 that there's something that has to be done and this
10 is why we're doing it, we need to halt.

11 I think of everything. I'm not afraid of
12 COVID. I went through a family member going
13 through cancer with COVID. Going through all that
14 process in hospitals, into PTs, into every hospital
15 and doctor's office known to man. One after
16 another. You can't just understand how much it was
17 scary at first, but right now, I'm not afraid of
18 COVID. I'm afraid of you. I'm afraid of what
19 you're going to do to the kids, and my grandkids
20 are at risk.

21 And I want you, please, to consider these
22 children. You know, many of them spoke very well
23 about moving forward, what they hope, and I hope
24 you'll listen to them. They're worth listening to.

1 That's all I have to say. Thank you.

2 MS. CIRIGNOTTA: Good morning. My name is
3 Maddalena Cirignotta, and I'm a mother of three
4 children enrolled in public schools in
5 Rhode Island. I'm also a certified language
6 teacher of over 19 years. I'm rated as highly
7 effective by the Rhode Island Department of Ed, and
8 I have experience teaching three different
9 languages to children ranging from preschool to
10 high school seniors. I'm an expert on language
11 acquisition.

12 For two years of our children's lives, you
13 impaired their language acquisition. You hindered
14 their speech development and their overall
15 communication. You hindered their ability to see
16 how words are formed, to hear how words should
17 sound when pronounced, to connect expressions with
18 phrases and words, to interpret how someone meant
19 their words to be received by others.

20 You forced children with speech delays to
21 wear a mask during speech therapy with a masked
22 therapist. These children who can't form words,
23 how are they supposed to -- who struggle to
24 pronounce them -- how are they supposed to learn

1 from someone whose mouth is covered as he
2 communicates?

3 Communication isn't two-dimensional. Not
4 only did you impair their ability to hear one
5 another's words, but you removed their ability to
6 communicate with their faces, their smiles, and
7 their expressions. We're talking about developing
8 children who haven't mastered these skills yet.

9 In fact, in 2022, on the heels of two
10 years of you enforcing masks on our children, CDC
11 did something it hadn't done in nearly two decades.
12 CDC amended language acquisition learning standards
13 for children and toddlers. In 2022, learning,
14 developing children should have known 400 words by
15 age 30 months, that's two and a half years. They
16 changed it to 50. We went from 400 to 50.

17 Why do you actively disregard the temporal
18 relationship between the prolonged forced mask
19 wearing and massively reducing language-development
20 milestones? I have hardly scratched the surface on
21 the harm you've caused. Your prolonged,
22 continuous, forced, ineffective mask mandates
23 wreaked havoc on our children's mental health and
24 socialization. I saw it.

1 You isolated them from one another. You
2 blocked their faces for two years. You impaired
3 social connections. You stunted social
4 development. You impaired facial recognition.

5 Two weeks ago, I had a high school senior
6 approach me. I didn't know him. He introduced
7 himself to me. He was a freshman I helped four
8 years earlier, but I had never seen his face
9 before. That's the second time that's happened to
10 me. It's disturbing. It shouldn't have. You
11 weakened their connections with one another and
12 with the adults in their lives.

13 When the mask mandates finally were lifted
14 in March of 2022, I finally started to see their
15 personalities emerging again. Many of my students
16 described mask use as isolating. They felt alone.
17 They had trouble communicating. They couldn't read
18 expressions, and they had difficulty making
19 friends.

20 Mandates also empowered adults to bully
21 children. I witnessed it. I know of several
22 overzealous teacher's aides in South Kingstown that
23 scolded and punished elementary school
24 kindergarteners if they so much as momentarily

1 pulled their mask away to catch a breath. That
2 wasn't happening to adults. Some even scolded
3 children for touching their mask.

4 I'd like to quote an eighth grader from
5 Chariho public schools in her public comments to
6 RIDE in February of 2022 when you finally dropped
7 the mandates. What she told RIDE was, and I quote,
8 When asked how masks make me feel, the words
9 anxious, alone, confused, tired, headache-ridden,
10 breathless, and panic-stricken come to mind. These
11 emotions are real. Please prioritize us and allow
12 us the option of taking these dirty, damp,
13 disgusting masks off our faces so we can develop
14 normally in society, end of quote. And you want
15 the power to do this to them again? Why?

16 Rhode Island Superior Court has
17 established that mask mandates cause irreparable
18 harm to children. Why are you willing to cause
19 irreparable harm to children?

20 Last month, I requested a benefit cost
21 analysis of a potential mask mandate. You sent it
22 to me. I'd like to quote it. "The only potential
23 cost of the regulation, if implemented, would be a
24 slight increase in the labor required by RIDOH to

1 produce memoranda and other documentation that
2 would be required."

3 That's your analysis? Why aren't you
4 addressing the cost to children? Why are you
5 ignoring the irreparable harm that your mask
6 mandates cause? The learning loss. The way that
7 you've damaged their mental health. One of my
8 neighbors had a five-year-old. He would cause a
9 scene every morning and refuse to go into the
10 school building. He hid behind trash cans and had
11 to be dragged into school. How do you think his
12 parents feel about your mandates? What do you
13 think that did to them trusting you?

14 I have students who missed two years of
15 school because they couldn't tolerate such a
16 prolonged mask use. Lightheadedness, panic
17 attacks, elevated heart rate, all the things
18 described today.

19 Children with cleft lip and palate and
20 other facial surgeries, children with asthma and
21 other respiratory conditions, children with sensory
22 sensitivity were excluded from school due to their
23 inability to wear a mask for 35-plus hours a week.

24 We made athletes exercise in masks. Who

1 knows the long-term effects of reducing oxygen and
2 raising their heart rates for prolonged periods.
3 We still don't know what that's going to do to
4 their health.

5 My son, who was in kindergarten at the
6 time, developed a fear of adults. My daughter
7 would hide in the bathroom -- the bathroom -- for
8 fresh air. They were constantly expecting to be
9 scolded. This was done by adults not acting in the
10 best interest of our children, and they were
11 empowered by you.

12 As a teacher, I witnessed the explosion of
13 eating disorders and other forms of self-harm. I
14 know someone else mentioned eating disorders.
15 Suicide attempts, depression, fear, loneliness.
16 I've seen emotional breakdowns in front of peers.
17 They can't even get professional help because there
18 aren't enough professionals to help them.

19 I witnessed a staph infection in a first
20 grader in the shape of a mask. She had to stay out
21 of school for two weeks to let it heal. So she
22 missed two extra weeks of school from the damage
23 done her from a mask.

24 It doesn't take an expert to see how

1 detrimental it was to violate a child's bodily
2 autonomy. Shame on you. You perpetuated crimes
3 against children.

4 The data consistently affirms that you
5 didn't even do it based on science. Masks didn't
6 even work. They're not supported by real-world
7 data either. All the states without mask mandates
8 fared better than Rhode Island did. The
9 overwhelming majority of Europe all fared better.
10 Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland never masked their
11 kids.

12 Our children do need protection, but it
13 isn't from the virus with almost zero -- that posed
14 zero risk to them. They need protection from a
15 weaponized Health Department who recklessly
16 inflicts harm on children, ignores science, and
17 ignores data and willfully disregards.

18 My husband, who's also a public
19 schoolteacher, asked me to point out that if he, in
20 2019, had told his children to have gym in a mask,
21 especially when it was hot out, that would have
22 been child abuse.

23 My 11-year-old prepared a speech for you
24 today and then ended up not feeling well and did

1 not come in. So I would like to read her words
2 before I conclude.

3 I'm Anwen Daley, and I'm 11 years old.
4 Your mask mandates hurt me. They made it hard to
5 breathe. I couldn't hear anyone. I couldn't
6 understand my teachers, and they couldn't
7 understand me. I never got breaks from hours of
8 wearing a mask, and I was bullied by adults when I
9 tried to give myself one.

10 I couldn't make friends because I couldn't
11 even see my friends. You forced us to cover our
12 faces. I had to exercise in a mask. It hurt my
13 body and made it even harder to breathe.

14 Have you tried to have gym in a mask when
15 it's 95 degrees out?

16 In June of 2022 -- this is not my
17 daughter's words -- in June of 2022, we had a
18 0.3 percent COVID rate and a heat wave, and our
19 schools are not air-conditioned. I watched our
20 children pulling sweat -- sweaty, wet masks away
21 from their faces. You waterboarded them. You
22 literally suffocated them for hours on end. That
23 was not in their best interest.

24 To complete my daughter's speech. I can

1 never trust you because you hurt children. Thank
2 you for your time.

3 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And our next
4 speaker is Kiela Daley.

5 MS. DALEY: My name is Kiela Daley. I am
6 the mother of five children. They are currently
7 17, 15, 13, 11, and 8. I wanted to be a mom for as
8 long as I could remember. I dreamt of having a
9 large family, and I am beyond blessed that my
10 husband's hard work and sacrifice has allowed me to
11 stay home and my full-time job has been raising
12 them.

13 I have taken this job very seriously. I
14 was only 25 years old having my first child, and it
15 hit hard coming home from the hospital, realizing
16 that I was in charge of this precious child's life.
17 I still felt like a kid myself, and the weight and
18 responsibility of this child's well-being was on my
19 shoulders. And I knew I was going to do everything
20 in my power to keep this child safe, protected, and
21 loved.

22 I was very blessed to have four more
23 children after this, and the sentiment was the same
24 for all of them. They are five very different

1 children. Their personalities, temperaments,
2 wants, needs are so vastly different. I had one
3 child wean off of breastfeeding at ten months and
4 the other one not until she was four-and-a-half
5 years old. I have tried to cater to their own
6 individual needs since infancy. I have tried to do
7 what is best for each of my children based on their
8 needs and based on what I believe to be in their
9 best interest.

10 I would always discuss their health with
11 our trusted pediatrician who has been in our family
12 forever. I chose not to give every vaccine they
13 offered. I chose to hold off on antibiotics
14 numerous times. We constantly discuss pros and
15 cons, facts, evidence, and I took all the science
16 into account when making any health decision for my
17 children. And then COVID hits.

18 COVID hits and then all the science,
19 evidence, facts, reasoning, logic goes out the
20 window for those in the government, for you, the
21 Rhode Island Department of Health. But not for me.
22 My parenting philosophies remain the same.
23 However, my rights were now being stripped from me.
24 My children's health and wellness was not supposed

1 to be handled by you, the Rhode Island Department
2 of Health.

3 Facts, COVID was not affecting children.
4 There were no children dying. There were no
5 children even being hospitalized. And I spoke in
6 great length to my pediatrician throughout all of
7 the COVID times, and not once did he or anyone in
8 his entire practice send a child to the ER due to
9 COVID.

10 The regulations and mandates put in place
11 by the Rhode Island Department of Health did not
12 follow any science. You did not follow any regular
13 rulemaking legal procedures. You chose to impose
14 masking on school-aged children with zero
15 scientific evidence that masking even worked. Your
16 first publication of the order proposed stated, and
17 I quote, "An absence of scientific evidence
18 regarding the effectiveness of the face masks
19 against a specific pathogen will not prevent the
20 Department from considering a face-mask
21 requirement." So even after all that we know now,
22 you are still choosing to not use science. I'm
23 sorry. Then what, if not science, is the
24 Rhode Island Department of Health basing their

1 evidence to make decisions on? What are you using?
2 What are you basing your mandates on?

3 You have demonstrated your ability to
4 abuse your power and take zero responsibility and
5 accountability at the expense of my children. It
6 is very clear that the Rhode Island Department of
7 Health has never had safety or evidence-based
8 science justifying the abuse that was put upon
9 children. My children. The same five kids that I
10 have literally spent every waking moment of my life
11 caring for.

12 It is very clear that the Rhode Island
13 Department of Health has never had safety
14 evidence-based science justifying what they have
15 done. The same five kids that I have spent every
16 waking moment of my life caring for, the same five
17 that no one knows more deeply than their own
18 mother, the same five that I've had to watch handle
19 wearing a mask affect them so differently, but none
20 being in a positive way.

21 I had to choose the lessor of two evils.
22 To go against everything that I knew was right and
23 make them mask and go to school and play sports so
24 they can have some sense of normalcy and

1 socializing or I had to keep them home and isolated
2 where they were miserable.

3 Their mental health was deteriorating at
4 such a rapid pace that caused such internal turmoil
5 and anxiety that I had daily panic attacks, and, in
6 the end, I chose to let them go to school and play
7 sports. And we had so many discussions about
8 how -- about how we all had to play the game for
9 now until the truth won over what our government
10 was controlling.

11 They saw for themselves how they were
12 never in danger of COVID. They saw for themselves
13 that this virus that was so deadly that you didn't
14 even have any symptoms. A virus so contagious that
15 you could wear a mask to enter a restaurant and
16 then take it off five feet away at your table. A
17 virus so deadly it comes out after 10 p.m. A virus
18 so awful that an Old Navy mask worn around your
19 chin helps protect them.

20 They knew that their mom had their
21 well-being in mind. That I had demonstrated for
22 years that my job was to protect them and to keep
23 them safe. They knew that what I was protecting
24 them from wasn't some virus but instead it was for

1 their freedom. It was protecting their bodily
2 rights. It was preserving the parental voice and
3 ability to care for your own children.

4 They knew I would never stop fighting for
5 them. I will never stop fighting for my children,
6 and I will protect them with everything that I
7 have. And I will continue to use logic and science
8 and research and prayer and help guide my decisions
9 when it comes to my children's physical and mental
10 health.

11 And I will never again put a mask on my
12 child, especially knowing that the Rhode Island
13 Department of Health and the government do not use
14 science to decide what's best for my child and my
15 children.

16 MR. GARCEAU: And our next speaker is
17 Rebecca DiStefano.

18 (AUDIO FEEDBACK)

19 MS. DiSTEFANO: I'll put that right here.
20 Good morning. I had gum surgery so if I sound a
21 little weird, that's why. They haven't shut me up
22 this long, they're not going to do that with a
23 little oral surgery.

24 My name is Becky DiStefano. I am a mom of

1 two children in the East Providence school
2 department. I am so proud to be in a room with so
3 many amazing parents, people I have only met and
4 known now for years because of fighting against
5 this.

6 And Crystle and Jerry, I have this sign.
7 I've had it on my lawn for four -- actually,
8 three-and-a-half years. I refuse to take it down
9 because I want the people who went along with this
10 to remember. Because a lot of people want everyone
11 to just forget what happened. Oh, it's over now.
12 No, it is not over, this was a test. And I also
13 want the people who fought back to continue and to
14 be vigilant.

15 So my experience, my kids were absolutely
16 affected. They were in middle and high school at
17 the time. But I think my son really said it best
18 when the mandate came down. He said, What about
19 the little kids? He was 12, my daughter was 14.
20 He wasn't worried about himself. We had talked a
21 lot about the fact that the masks are ineffective
22 and that a lot of this was just fear-based. But my
23 kids worried about the little ones, and I did too.

24 I saw firsthand what happened in the

1 schools when I substitute taught in September
2 through December of 2020. It was horrible. They
3 had stickers on the floor where the kids could
4 stand. The kids were constantly told, pull your
5 mask up. Pull your mask up. Pull your mask up.
6 Don't touch your face. Don't look at your friends.
7 Don't turn around. You can't have lunch together.
8 You can't -- don't turn around. Don't talk. Don't
9 turn around. Don't talk. This is all day. And
10 I'm saying it over and over again because this is
11 what these kids heard. Pull your mask up. Pull
12 your mask up. Pull your mask up.

13 Sanitize. The amount of alcohol-based
14 sanitizer that they wanted these kids to use, I
15 told them not to. Because we're not going into
16 surgery. You just washed your hands. You don't
17 need to do that. And the reason I got to say that
18 to them is because they needed a bathroom escort.
19 We had to walk all the way around the building.
20 You could only go one way. Just like in the
21 supermarket, which saved everybody's lives. One
22 way around.

23 These kids were filled with fear every
24 single minute, and I refused to take part. I

1 taught maskless. I told them, listen, guys, we're
2 fine. You're fine. I said, you want to do a
3 lesson together, or do you want to do it on your
4 Chromebooks? Because this is what they were so
5 used to. And guess what, every single time, we
6 want to learn it together. Because these kids were
7 told, be quiet. Pull your mask up. Sit on your
8 Chromebook. Be quiet. Turn around. Be quiet.
9 Turn around. Be quiet. Turn around. They craved
10 normalcy. They craved attention. They're being
11 told to go outside for recess in masks. Stay away
12 from each other. Stay away from each other.

13 The superintendent literally said on the
14 loudspeaker -- I recorded it while I was substitute
15 teaching doing a Christmas craft to give them sort
16 of normalcy -- well, I'm going to be closing the
17 schools early because I really think that this is
18 the best decision. And I want to remind you all to
19 stay away from your friends this Christmas vacation
20 and really just stay home with your families and
21 keep your masks on. And I'm like, unbelievable.

22 The harm that was done, the fear, the
23 daily emails about quarantine and isolation and
24 contact tracing and stalking everybody, make sure

1 you call every single person you've seen every
2 single day. Anyway, the list goes on and on. It's
3 horrible what happened. It's never going to happen
4 again. I want to be very clear, that whether this
5 regulation goes through, whatever rule goes
6 through, we're not doing it. We're not complying.
7 It's not going to happen.

8 They can put a mandate. I'll show up with
9 my kid every day at the school. My school
10 department knows me very well. Our mayor tried to
11 have us arrested. I mean, really, we're used to
12 this. We're used to this. "We, the parents," is
13 not just a shirt I wear. It's a statement saying
14 that we, the parents, make the decision. And as my
15 husband constantly says, we do not co-parent with
16 the government. You guys are the government. It's
17 not going to happen.

18 One final thing, I'm not to go on and on.
19 One final thing is that I'm in a room with people
20 who are braver, who are smarter, and who work
21 harder than I do, and I am honored to be in their
22 presence and have learned from them. And I'm not
23 bashing myself, but I have learned so much from
24 them.

1 And I will tell you this, we are a group,
2 we are a community that is not going away. This is
3 not over after today. We are vigilant. We will
4 keep on eye on everybody. And we know what to look
5 for, and we are here for the long haul.

6 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
7 is Cheryl Greathouse.

8 MS. GREATHOUSE: Hello. My name is
9 Cheryl Greathouse. I am a plaintiff with the
10 parents' union, and I sit on the Gloucester Town
11 Council. I want you folks to know that, when you
12 imposed that mandate, those of us up in the high
13 country don't go along with your mandates. Our
14 town council voted against your mandate and chose
15 to not follow it. And we were willing -- and we
16 were willing to forego your funding. We were going
17 to self-fund our own schools. And then the
18 executive order came down and squelched it all.

19 But I'm here today to speak regarding my
20 grandson. He went from the second to the third
21 grade. He was -- he is an extremely outgoing,
22 kind, friendly boy, who his teacher said he walks
23 down the hallway and he brings a smile to our
24 faces. Your mandate destroyed him.

1 When his third grade began, rather than go
2 to school with his friends, because he marches to
3 his own drummer, he chose to stay home and do
4 distance learning with me. Two months into it, he
5 felt very isolated and he opted to go to school.
6 He had to go to school with a mask that you folks
7 mandated. He had daily headaches. He had to go to
8 the nurse's office all the time. He had to be
9 picked up at school. He lost a great deal of his
10 education.

11 He was always very tired. He was
12 depressed. This was a boy that just was so filled
13 with enthusiasm and the love for life. It got
14 squelched. It diminished. He wanted to play
15 basketball. He loves sports. But he opted to not
16 play that year because he said, I cannot run up and
17 down the court sweaty and hot wearing a mask. I'll
18 pass out.

19 I was really concerned for the light that
20 this child carried within him being diminished.
21 And so, as a grandmother, I searched every option I
22 could find, and I found fake masks. And guess
23 what, I bought them. And they were wonderful.
24 They were black. There were two pieces of fabric,

1 and you could breathe through those masks. So he
2 was able to get oxygen, and he was able to exhale
3 carbon dioxide. And once I put him in those masks,
4 his headaches diminished.

5 So I ask you folks to take all that you've
6 heard into consideration. Protect our children.
7 We, the grandparents, the parents, know what is
8 best for our children.

9 And so I would like to close today with a
10 quote from Benjamin Franklin. "They that give up
11 essential liberty to obtain temporary safety,
12 deserve neither liberty or safety." And I assure
13 you we will never, ever give up our freedom. We
14 will never give up our freedom to you folks or the
15 government of Rhode Island. Thank you.

16 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Thank you. Our
17 next speaker is Carrissa Moglia.

18 MS. MOGLIA: Good afternoon. To be
19 honest, when COVID first hit in March 2020, I had a
20 new baby at home, and I was worried. I would wear
21 a mask to go to the grocery store, etc.

22 Shortly after, I started to experience
23 some negative health effects, and so did my eldest
24 child, such as exacerbated asthma symptoms,

1 fainting, headaches, chronic rhinitis. He missed
2 school due to this. He was reprimanded by a
3 teacher for taking his mask down to catch his
4 breathe after climbing three flights of stairs at
5 school.

6 All of this made me look into the pros and
7 cons of masking. I found scientific medical
8 journals and credible experts to see what evidence
9 there was on the effectiveness of masking to
10 mitigate viruses and if there were any potential
11 harms.

12 What I found, and what I've attached to my
13 testimony, was that masks are not an effective
14 means and can even make one more likely to catch
15 the flu or other viruses.

16 One of the mentioned attachments comes
17 from industrial hygienist, Stephen Petty, who has
18 30-plus years' experience regarding PPE and has
19 been an expert witness in over 400 legal cases. He
20 explains that a tight-fitting N95 mask is, at best,
21 12 percent effective when worn correctly against
22 COVID and other viruses. The effectiveness of a
23 cloth facial covering falls to zero when there is a
24 3 percent or more open area in the edges around the

1 sides. So did we really expect children as young
2 as two years old to wear masks and not touch them?
3 On average, per the CDC, an adult touches their
4 face 23 times.

5 When I tried to civilly discuss this with
6 decision-makers, I was met with animosity instead
7 of an open conversation. I find it disheartening
8 that the agency whose mission is to prevent disease
9 and protect and promote the health and safety of
10 Rhode Islanders is not basing its decisions on all
11 available scientific evidence. The preposterous
12 language in the original proposed masking
13 regulation stated in Section 4.3B -- somebody
14 mentioned this before -- an absence of scientific
15 evidence regarding the effectiveness of face masks
16 against a specific pathogen will not prevent the
17 Department from considering a face-mask
18 requirement. That sounds absolutely absurd, and
19 I'm thankful that we have legal representation to
20 force the removal of this language.

21 The new proposed regulation says that it
22 will take into account the effectiveness,
23 disadvantages, and side effects of masking. So let
24 the record show that parents did receive the ruling

1 from Judge Lanphear that a side effect, the
2 disadvantage is masking our children caused
3 irreparable harm.

4 I'm sure many can agree that the
5 impression RIDOH is giving us is an agency that's
6 inept. Employees making decisions affecting the
7 population should be critical thinkers and
8 researchers. I'm not so sure that's the case,
9 especially after the testimony received in court
10 from the previous acting director, Dr. McDonald.
11 He admitted that he just took orders from the CDC
12 without reading any of the primary sources and data
13 himself.

14 If any future mask mandate for schools is
15 going to be the final decision of the director for
16 RIDOH, as referenced in the new proposed regulation
17 Section 4.3C, then it should spell out that the
18 director is required to thoroughly review the
19 available information firsthand.

20 We should not have had to go through the
21 trouble and financial burden of obtaining a lawyer
22 to have a public agency do their job and follow the
23 proper regulatory process. We are expected to
24 follow all of the rules, yet those in leadership

1 don't. And I hope, going forward, this would
2 change, but in the event that it doesn't, we will
3 be here again. Thank you.

4 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
5 is Ana Roque.

6 MS. ROQUE: Hi. My name is Ana Roque, and
7 I am a frustrated parent on this lawsuit;
8 therefore, I'm opposing this proposed regulation.

9 So I am going to read this, but I just
10 wanted to say something else before I start reading
11 this. I've never worn a mask. I've never worn a
12 mask. Okay. I've never had a COVID test. My
13 children have never had COVID tests.

14 I learned early on walking into anyplace
15 and somebody telling me to put on a mask, I would
16 just keep walking and say, I am exempt. And I
17 learned that once I said that, the majority of any
18 business I walked into left me alone.

19 I walked into stores with my kids. Now
20 they were middle school -- a middle schooler and a
21 high schooler. If anyone tried to stop us to put
22 on a mask, I just said, we're all exempt. And
23 that's pretty much what happened, and we would just
24 go on about and just get stares from everybody.

1 But I did what I had to do because I didn't believe
2 that masks were doing anything to stop the virus.

3 I'm not a rule-breaker. If I believe that
4 that was something that was keeping myself safe and
5 my children, I would put on a mask. But because I
6 knew and did not believe that that was doing
7 anything, I stood my ground for these last three
8 years going into doctors' offices, into
9 supermarkets, into banks, anywhere. And I got away
10 with not putting on a mask on myself and on my
11 children. Thank you.

12 The only place that I didn't get away with
13 that was the schools. Okay. And it was because of
14 my children not having enough confidence in me to
15 homeschool them at that age. I begged them, let's
16 just stay home. We can do this. We don't need to
17 go to school. You guys don't need to be muzzled.
18 We've never been tested. We've never put on masks.
19 Why are we going to do it now? Please, mom, just
20 let us.

21 My son, who's 19 years old, is a freshman
22 at URI. He's an excellent student, not because
23 of -- that's just the way that he is. He was
24 afraid, and he didn't have confidence in me to

1 homeschool him at the age of him going into high
2 school. Even though I begged them to just give it
3 a chance, and if it doesn't work out, we'll go to
4 school. We'll put on the masks. They begged me,
5 please, mom, let's just try it. Let's just see if
6 it's really going to hurt us, if it's going to
7 bother us. Let's see if we can get through the day
8 with doing it. We'll put it under our nose. We'll
9 try to do everything that we can so that it doesn't
10 give us headaches, it doesn't do this, it doesn't
11 do that.

12 And I agreed, and I sent my kids to
13 school, going against everything that I believed
14 in. Going against -- going into every medical
15 facility and then telling me, your child can't be
16 seen because he doesn't have a mask, and all I had
17 to say was, "Are you denying me service?" And I
18 think that scared them. Because once I said, "Are
19 you denying me service," they were just like, "just
20 sit right there then." And then everything got
21 done. Everything got done.

22 I went to a Stop & Shop bank. They told
23 me I could not -- they couldn't take care of me
24 because I wouldn't put on a mask. So I went down

1 to the next Stop & Shop, and that bank,
2 Citizens Bank, took care of me even though the
3 Stop & Shop prior didn't take care of me.

4 This is what I'm talking about with this
5 Health Department and all your rules and
6 regulations, is that you can do something in one
7 place and you didn't have to do it in another
8 place. Why did one Citizens Bank deny me and not
9 cash my freaking check that I worked for, okay,
10 because I didn't have a mask on. And I went down
11 the street another mile to another Stop & Shop,
12 with another bank teller, and he didn't even
13 question it, and he cashed my check.

14 So that's what I'm trying to say, is that
15 I never wore a mask. My kids never wore a mask
16 unless they went to school because they begged me
17 to let them go to school, even though I wanted to
18 homeschool them.

19 We've never tested. This bogus testing.
20 My son stayed home from school because -- not
21 because he was sick, but because somebody that was
22 next to him had COVID. So they called me and told
23 me that because my son was near this kid that got
24 tested for COVID, my son now has to get tested for

1 COVID in order for him to go back to school. And
2 when I said, no, my son's not getting tested to go
3 back to school, they told me, well, your son has to
4 stay out for ten magical days. So my son stayed
5 out for ten magical days and lost work and got
6 pissed at me because of how he is in school with
7 his education. And he wanted to be in school and
8 learn in front of a teacher and stayed home for ten
9 days because I refused for him to get tested
10 because a kid got tested that was next to him.
11 Okay.

12 Okay. Now I'm going to read my friggin'
13 paper. I want to make sure that Rhode Island
14 Department of Health will not get away with
15 rejecting science. If masks work, why did the
16 Rhode Island Department of Health propose a
17 regulation to give itself power to impose mandates
18 without science?

19 Section 4.3, Masking in School, Part B.
20 You've read it several times. I'm going to tell
21 you again. I'm going to tell you again because the
22 fact that this was even written is just asinine.
23 Okay. As far as we've gotten with COVID and
24 testing and masking and all this, the fact that

1 this section was written by whatever you guys want
2 to call yourselves. I just don't even understand,
3 but I'm going to read it. "An absence of
4 scientific evidence regarding the effectiveness of
5 face masks against a specific pathogen" -- a
6 specific pathogen. Specific pathogen -- "will not
7 prevent the Department from considering a face-mask
8 requirement."

9 When I read that, I thought, well, it's
10 got to be a misprint. Like, this has got to be a
11 mistake. It's got to be a mistake. Then we got on
12 the Zoom, and it wasn't a mistake. But, instead, I
13 found myself rallying up parents again to come to
14 hold the State accountable.

15 So I have a few questions. I'm aware
16 there will be no engaging dialogue. I totally
17 understand, but I'm going to ask them anyway.
18 Maybe you guys can ask your upper-ups, whoever sent
19 you here to sit here and listen to all of us speak.
20 Okay.

21 If not science, what are they following?
22 That was number one.

23 Number two, what is the basis for a
24 regulation if they don't have to use scientific

1 evidence that something works for a specific
2 pathogen to be able to consider a face-mask
3 requirement?

4 Number three, are there other things that
5 the Department of Health offers up in terms of
6 solutions or public health advice that don't have
7 scientific backing? Is there anything else you
8 guys do, or is it just masks on children?

9 Number 4, if the Department can have a
10 regulation like this and specifically say it's not
11 based on evidence, what else can they make you do?
12 What other type of regulation can they impose on
13 the people?

14 We, the parents, the grandparents, the
15 aunties, the uncles, are going to need a lot more
16 than that. We're all here letting the State know
17 that the experts, you people, your uppity-ups,
18 whoever sent you here, okay, saying a quote such
19 as, "masks just work." Okay. Okay. And that came
20 from the mouth of Dr. Alexander-Scott, former head
21 of the Rhode Island Health Department. We can
22 provide video on her saying that. Those words are
23 not proof based on scientific evidence that masks
24 on children K through 12 for eight frickin' hours a

1 day were safe and effective. Okay. Those words,
2 those words don't work.

3 Let me remind you, now that we're clear,
4 although the State has not been able to provide
5 evidence that masks are safe and effective, there's
6 plenty of evidence that was provided showing how
7 harmful masks actually were for children.

8 Let's also be reminded that the judge
9 ruled irreparable harm, which means there was harm,
10 period. There was harm. So because there was
11 harm, you people or your uppity people still
12 thought it was okay to write a section such as 4.3,
13 Masking in School, Part B. Okay. You guys still
14 felt, yeah, we're going to try to put that in
15 there. So, yeah. We're going to need a brand new
16 section on 4.3 Masking in School, Part B written on
17 this proposed regulation.

18 And the last thing I want to say is, I
19 never wore a mask ever. No one in this world can
20 say they ever saw me put on a mask, ever. And I
21 never will. And my children never. Never. Why
22 can't you look at anybody? Why have you not stared
23 at one person up here? Why? You're just staring.
24 Who are you? I just found out you're the one we

1 sent all the emails to. Did you read my email, my
2 novel?

3 MR. GARCEAU: Yes.

4 MS. ROQUE: You did? I hope you did.
5 Okay. You should show parents respect by looking
6 them in the eye as we're looking at all of you in
7 the eye. Okay. We're never wearing masks again.
8 Never. Okay. The end.

9 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Our next speaker
10 is Ellen Schaffer.

11 MS. SCHAFFER: I don't know if I can hold
12 this because I kind of need two hands.

13 MS. ROQUE: I can hold it for you. How
14 about I hold it for you.

15 MS. SCHAFFER: I realize that this is
16 quite an emotional hearing. And we're all human
17 beings here. I appreciate that. And I know that
18 you were sent here to listen to us. I can't
19 promise you that I, too, am not going to get
20 emotional, but I can promise you that, as human
21 beings, I respect your humanity. And I believe
22 that the passion here in this room comes from us
23 not feeling as though our humanity and the humanity
24 of our children has been respected with the same

1 degree.

2 I share with Ana that the good Lord
3 somehow blessed me with a path that I was able to
4 stay home having never even owned a mask in our
5 house. I never had one on, and I never put one on
6 my daughter.

7 But I recognize, through the bonds that I
8 have formed with many of the people in this room
9 and were here earlier, that people come to a place
10 of desperation where they feel they have no choice.
11 And it pains me that a public body that upholds
12 itself as one that is trying to instill trust, that
13 holds itself up as an advocate for the defenseless,
14 for the most vulnerable, would proceed forth with
15 something that was so egregiously in violation of
16 human rights, basic human rights for little
17 children, and the most vulnerable populations were
18 the ones that were the most defenseless in this.

19 The Providence school district was the
20 last holdout that had to have the smackdown from
21 the masterful attorney Greg Piccirilli when they
22 were going to hold out and try to continue masking
23 children. Providence has some of the most
24 vulnerable populations in our state. They couldn't

1 come to a parents' union meeting. Some of them
2 don't even have computers to figure out how to
3 network with other people.

4 So there's a whole broad spectrum of
5 socioeconomic circumstances within the body of
6 parents that were able to find each other. There's
7 diversity of races, all sorts of demographics of us
8 came together for our kids, each of who were all in
9 different situations.

10 So if you just bear with me for one
11 moment. In addition to supporting pretty close to
12 every other single word that -- and point that was
13 made here already, I just want to emphasize that
14 the loss of trust in public health and unsupported
15 public health recommendations and measures eroded
16 the trust in RIDOH.

17 And I went through much of the stated
18 RIDOH's leading priorities, strategies, and goals.
19 The first publication of this that I found was from
20 Nicole Alexander-Scott when she was still on our
21 throne here. And then there has been just recently
22 a follow-up that's only -- it's not in a
23 presentation form, as far as I found, but this is
24 from September of this past year. And it pretty

1 much mirrors -- I haven't been able to get through
2 every point of it, but as far as I can tell, it
3 mirrors this version from the former director.

4 RIDOH's stated overarching goal is to
5 positively demonstrate for Rhode Islanders the
6 purpose and importance of public health. The
7 leading priorities to support that overarching goal
8 are listed as address socioeconomic and
9 environmentally determinants of health in
10 Rhode Island, eliminate disparities of health in
11 Rhode Island, and promote health equity, ensure
12 access to quality health services for
13 Rhode Islanders, including our vulnerable
14 populations.

15 I would ask you, with respect to this
16 proposed regulation, to explain how, considering
17 the harms of mask mandates on children, does that
18 line up with the overarching goal and the leading
19 priorities of this body.

20 As far as the leading priority of
21 addressing the social and environmental
22 determinants of health in Rhode Island, what are we
23 considering environmental health and what kind of
24 environment children are put into when they are

1 rebreathing toxic bodily waste all day long? Would
2 that be considered in a regulation when addressing
3 determinants of -- environmental determinants of
4 health?

5 For the leading priority of eliminating
6 the disparities of health in Rhode Island and
7 promoting health equity, one of the examples of
8 disparities that this leading priority attempts to
9 target under a bullet point of race and ethnicity
10 lists cancer, diabetes, and asthma. I would ask
11 this body to consider how such a proposed
12 regulation would take into consideration the
13 effects of asthma on children who are an example of
14 a disparity in being served by this body in our
15 state.

16 As far as the leading priority of ensuring
17 access to quality health services for
18 Rhode Islanders, including our vulnerable
19 populations, one of the examples is ensuring access
20 to care for maternal and child health. Again,
21 we're supposed to be considering children in
22 leading priorities of this body, and I would ask
23 you to consider how this regulation takes into
24 account the court decided irreparable harm that

1 these children have suffered.

2 And I'm sure it's not lost on this body
3 that, even with such a turnout that we've had
4 today, it's a fraction, obviously, of, you know,
5 the hundreds of thousands of people in the state,
6 but I'm sure it's not lost on you that, if this
7 many showed up to a 9 a.m. hearing on a weekday,
8 that we represent exponentially more families that
9 also experienced that irreparable harm. It doesn't
10 just apply to plaintiffs. I think the significance
11 of the lawsuit speaks for itself that way.

12 Supporting this overarching mission and
13 these priorities are some strategies. There's
14 listed five strategies. Promote healthy living for
15 all through all stages of life. Ensure access to
16 safe food, water, and healthy environments in all
17 communities. Promote a comprehensive health system
18 that a person can navigate, access, and afford.
19 Prevent, investigate, control, and eliminate health
20 hazards and emergent threats, and analyze and
21 communicate data to improve the public's health.

22 And I would like to draw special attention
23 to the fourth and fifth ones of preventing,
24 investigating, control, and eliminate health

1 hazards and emergent threats. I would argue that
2 that doesn't just apply to the threats from, for
3 example, a virus, some sort of disease, but also
4 from the hazard and emergent threats from
5 overreacting, or if you don't want to call it
6 overreacting, I guess the saying goes, sometimes
7 that the cure is worse than the -- what's the --

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Disease.

9 MS. SCHAFFER: That the cure is worse than
10 the disease sometimes. So it asks how this
11 regulation would attempt to address negative
12 outcomes from reacting to some emergent health
13 threats and not others.

14 Strategy No. 4, prevent, investigate,
15 control, and eliminate health hazards and emergent
16 threats. Again, just touching on another point
17 outlined by this body. It says, minimize exposure
18 to traumatic experiences, such as bullying,
19 violence, and neglect.

20 I think it's clear that the experiences
21 that many children and families experienced as a
22 result of this mask mandate were traumatic. They
23 experienced -- what is overwhelming for me to think
24 about sometimes -- the bullying from adults. About

1 the pain and the suffering and the traumatic
2 experiences that they were going through. The
3 dismissal of that, the mocking, the scorn, the
4 denial from adults across the state was utterly
5 dehumanizing. So I ask you to pay attention to our
6 own bullet points under Strategy No. 4.

7 Under Strategy No. 5, analyze and
8 communicate data to improve the public's health.
9 Excuse me. This includes data monitoring. Ensure
10 that quality public health data are collected
11 consistently using current technology.

12 I ask how this proposed regulation would
13 address data collection on what happened to the
14 kids. Has there been any data collection from
15 experts, such as the ones that have spoken here
16 today, with regard to speech pathology, with regard
17 to increases in seizures, with regard to referrals
18 to mental health providers -- mental health
19 counseling and providers. What has been -- if
20 RIDOH would continue to perhaps lean on the excuse,
21 we did what we had to do at the time. Nobody knew
22 what was going on.

23 We're four years in. One of the first
24 things that should have been done, as things were

1 rolling out that you didn't know the implications
2 of, should have been simultaneously tracking every
3 step of the way looking for the harms of what your
4 reactions were causing.

5 So we should have a robust data collection
6 this far on in years. That should have been
7 monitored all along the way. We're going to find
8 advocates in the communities. We're going to have
9 point people, teachers, special educators, doctors,
10 physicians, community advocates that will give us
11 data to collect on the harms that may be being
12 caused.

13 I'm going to conclude because, obviously,
14 there's a lot more parents that need to speak. But
15 as this proposal is written, it's vague language
16 and it's persistent in trying to empower itself
17 with an overreach of authority. It's made for the
18 fire. It should be burned. There's nothing in it
19 that's truly advocating for the well-being of
20 children or the health and safety of any
21 Rhode Islander. Thank you.

22 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Thank you. And
23 our next speaker is Lori Wycall.

24 MS. WYCALL: Hi. I'm Lori Wycall. I'm a

1 resident of Westerly, Rhode Island. I'm one of the
2 original plaintiffs on this lawsuit. I'm a parent
3 of three high schoolers, and I'm a Westerly School
4 Committee member. Prior to running for school
5 committee, I was a substitute teacher at Westerly
6 public schools.

7 I worked as a substitute in the school for
8 several years prior to COVID and throughout the
9 COVID years. I was actually in the middle school
10 in Westerly on Friday the 13th of 2020 to hear the
11 announcement that school was going to be released
12 for two weeks, which turned out to be seven months.
13 And when we did return in October of 2021, all the
14 kids and teachers and everybody was back in school
15 in masks, and I subbed a lot because of the
16 absenteeism of teachers.

17 I saw hands-on the effects of the kids
18 being masked in school, in addition to the effects
19 on my children. It was horrible. The children did
20 not socialize. They were told to not socialize.
21 I'm not going to repeat everything that everybody
22 has said, but no talking at lunch. They didn't
23 even leave their classrooms. They were with the
24 same 15 to 18 kids a day, and none of them spoke to

1 each other. I would go an entire day subbing and
2 not hear a child speak a word. The masks were
3 truly muzzles or truly muzzled the kids. Sometimes
4 they'd type their response into the Google Chat but
5 nobody spoke.

6 The negative effects were just so obvious
7 in the classrooms on the kids, with my own kids, I
8 began to speak out at school committee meetings.
9 And that's kind of what motivated me to run. So as
10 a school committee member, I would never, ever
11 support a guidance that came down from the
12 Rhode Island Department of Health.

13 Again, that's all it is, it's a guidance.
14 We would never -- I know I have the support of my
15 committee -- we would never support it. We would
16 never follow it. I hashtag, "never again,"
17 constantly. I would never again put the children
18 in masks.

19 There was a lot of information way back.
20 I can kind of understand, you know, why some people
21 maybe believed some of it, but once -- now that
22 we're three years into this and we can see the
23 actual facts and the actual science and data that's
24 come in since March of 2020, the science is here.

1 Masks are not proven to spread COVID in a school
2 setting.

3 Because of the science, because of the
4 irreparable harm that has been done to our children
5 and seeing all of this damage that's been
6 inflicted, a mask mandate should never be allowed
7 to happen again. To look back on the careless and
8 irresponsible, unscientific decision that was made
9 by your Department years ago, and to look at the
10 effects, I'm left every day making sure that my
11 kids are doing okay still. I can still see the
12 effects on them.

13 And, as a school committee member, we have
14 mental health on our agenda every other week, every
15 two weeks that we have a meeting. We're talking
16 about the fallout from your destructive policies
17 and what they have done to the kids. And we don't
18 even know, sadly to say, we don't even know the
19 depths of what damage has been done.

20 And now looking at this proposed
21 regulation on how you may impose mandates again in
22 the future, it's absolutely ridiculous. As Ellen
23 said, it was made for the fire. Fifteen points
24 that can give you any little excuse at the drop of

1 a hat to put a mandate on the children again.

2 I think at this point, if you're going to
3 have a regulation like this, the only thing it
4 would do would be to follow the science. Masking
5 in schools should never be allowed to occur without
6 multiple randomized trials proving their
7 effectiveness. And there is nothing in place, so
8 you may as well just scrap this regulation. We
9 will never again put our children in masks. And
10 your Department of Health is not following the
11 science. You're following politics and an
12 ideology, and it's wrong.

13 And I just also have to say, today's been
14 a lot more emotional than I thought it was going to
15 be. And I'm so glad to be in this room with all of
16 you. Thank you very much.

17 MR. GARCEAU: Thank you. And our last
18 speaker for the Plaintiffs is Richard Southwell.

19 MR. SOUTHWELL: Before we start, I'm going
20 to call up a couple of slides on the projector so I
21 think you guys are going to be in the way.

22 MS. LeCLAIRE: Well, we were told to maybe
23 shut off the lights.

24 MR. SOUTHWELL: Do you need the lights

1 off?

2 MS. LeCLAIRE: Give me a minute to do
3 that.

4 MR. SOUTHWELL: Sure, absolutely. Do you
5 need a break? Do you want a break?

6 MS. LeCLAIRE: Do you want a break, the
7 gentleman is asking you.

8 COURT REPORTER: I'm okay. Thank you,
9 though.

10 MS. LeCLAIRE: I'm going to try. I'm
11 going to try. I might shut off the lights, all of
12 them.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ma'am, it's the
14 first panel, the first one. I can show you.

15 MS. LeCLAIRE: Okay. Are you good, sir.
16 Do you want me to hold that for you?

17 MR. SOUTHWELL: No, no. No, but I
18 appreciate it.

19 MS. LeCLAIRE: You've got the glasses.
20 You good?

21 MR. SOUTHWELL: Yeah, I've got my readers.
22 I've got my drugstore readers here, the microphone,
23 I've got the mood lighting going.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Rich, do you need

1 the projector?

2 MR. SOUTHWELL: I will, and I will give
3 Ellen the cue when it's time. So you got a few
4 minutes here. Are we all set, folks?

5 MS. LECLAIRE: I'm moving out of your way.

6 MR. SOUTHWELL: Okay. All right. Get
7 comfy. So thank you all for coming. My name is
8 Rich Southwell, and I am the lead plaintiff in
9 Southwell v. McKee.

10 So I thought that there were a couple
11 different angles we could take with this time, but
12 I thought the best thing to do, in trying to figure
13 out what has happened and why it happened over the
14 last couple of years, specifically with masks,
15 would be instructive. So we're going to do a
16 little history lesson here. Everybody like
17 history? Everybody like stories? You better.

18 So we're going to go back four years
19 tomorrow, March 16, 2020. That was the first time
20 we heard the phrase, "15 days to flatten the
21 curve." Four years ago tomorrow. At this point,
22 we didn't know at the time, but our kids would not
23 return to school in that 2020 -- '19/2020 school
24 year. They would be home doing remote learning for

1 the rest of the year.

2 That was followed by the summer of 2020,
3 when there was much contentious debate about
4 whether to reopen schools. And after that
5 contentious debate, the decision was made to reopen
6 the schools for in-person learning; however, there
7 would be strict COVID protocols in place, including
8 the masking of children throughout the school day.
9 It was wildly unpopular but, at that point, we were
10 still not quite sure what COVID was, and we weren't
11 quite sure how it was going to play out in the
12 school building. But we had a year of experience,
13 and we hated it. It was not effective, and it was
14 bad for the kids.

15 So, in the summer of 2021, we're now
16 16 months after, "15 days to flatten the curve,"
17 concerned parents began engaging with school
18 committees to adopt mask-optional policies for the
19 upcoming school year. There was a growing
20 recognition about the physical and psychological
21 harm of COVID protocols generate and mask
22 requirements specifically were causing among school
23 children. There was also a growing skepticism
24 about the efficacy of masking children while they

1 were in school.

2 The skeptics noted that, despite nearly a
3 year into the -- being a year and a half into the
4 pandemic, there had been little to no scientific
5 research on the benefits or harms that masking
6 school children could cause. There was no
7 historical research to support the use of masks to
8 reduce the spread of airborne illness. Despite the
9 lack of evidence, public health officials continued
10 to insist that masks work.

11 September of 2021, Centers For Disease
12 Control rode to the rescue of public health
13 officials by publishing a study entitled,
14 "Association Between K-12 School Mask Policies and
15 School-Associated COVID-19 Outbreaks," Maricopa and
16 Pima counties, Arizona, July to August 2021.
17 That's a mouthful, and so it would become known as,
18 "the Pima study."

19 The stunning conclusion reached in the
20 Pima study is that school districts, without mask
21 mandates, were nearly three times as likely to have
22 an outbreak of COVID. The sound byte was
23 aggressively pushed by public health officials and
24 major media outlets as the scientific proof that

1 masks work.

2 In October of 2021, as part of our
3 lawsuit, the Pima study was entered into evidence
4 by Rhode Island Department of Health as part of
5 their defense in the Southwell v. McKee lawsuit.
6 So that was the science that they were relying on
7 in their argument.

8 In November of 2021, the CDC awarded
9 Rhode Island an \$81.7 million grant for the
10 construction of a new public health laboratory.
11 December 2021, an article titled, "The CDC's Flawed
12 Case For Wearing Masks in School," was published in
13 The Atlantic magazine. Based on discussions with
14 several research scientists, the author raised
15 legitimate questions about the dataset and
16 underlying methodology in the Pima study. The
17 science was being questioned.

18 The CDC, which published the Pima,
19 Arizona, study in its Morbidity and Mortality
20 Weekly Reporter, otherwise known as MMWR, responded
21 to the article's author by stating -- and I'm
22 quoting -- "MMWR is committed to quickly correcting
23 errors when they are identified. We reviewed the
24 specific items below that you described below and

1 found no errors." American author Upton Sinclair
2 had a great line, and he was absolutely right when
3 he said, "It is difficult to get a man to
4 understand something when his salary depends on him
5 not understanding it."

6 February 1, 2022, we are now nearly two
7 years past, "15 days to flatten the curve," and the
8 General Assembly held its first public hearings in
9 nearly two years. And the topic of those hearings
10 was extending the governor's emergency powers.
11 Concerned parents testified en masse to oppose the
12 measure based on the implications that it could
13 have for continued school masking.

14 Dr. James McDonald submitted written
15 testimony to the committee and cited the findings
16 of the Pima study as justification for continued
17 school masking. The Pima study remained their
18 science.

19 March '22, as we all know, the
20 General Assembly finally buckled to political
21 pressure and ended the school mask mandates in
22 Rhode Island. They countered the science. There
23 were no heros in this. Just so we're clear.

24 Things went quiet for a while, and then,

1 in September 30th of 2022, one year after the Pima,
2 Arizona, study was published by the CDC,
3 researchers Chandra and Hoag released a study
4 titled, "Lack of Correlation Between School Mask
5 Mandates in Pediatric COVID-19 Cases in Large
6 Cohort." It was published in the Journal of
7 Infection. I'm reading from the abstract of the
8 study. The objectives were to expand upon an
9 observational study published by the Centers For
10 Disease Control, CDC, showing an association
11 between school mask mandates and lower pediatric
12 COVID-19 cases. We examined whether this
13 association persisted in a larger nationally
14 representative dataset over a longer period of
15 time.

16 So the Pima study was done over a
17 two-month time period in a very small geographical
18 location. They expanded the timeframe, they cast a
19 wider net geographically, and the conclusions were,
20 the association between school mask mandates in
21 cases did not persist in the extended example.
22 Observational studies of interventions are prone to
23 multiple biases and provide insufficient evidence
24 for recommending mask mandates. This was a direct

1 counter to the science.

2 The study was a direct challenge to the
3 science. And we're going to pull this up. And
4 I'll give you the cue, whenever you're ready there,
5 Allen. But it begs the question, why would the
6 Department of Health in Rhode Island not question
7 the CDC's paper from Pima, Arizona? And I think
8 the answer lies in this picture here. This is a
9 picture coming up from December 9th of 2022.

10 (TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES)

11 MR. SOUTHWELL: We have no signal. Well,
12 you guys keep working on that. Does anybody in
13 Rhode Island Department of Health -- you're not
14 going to answer me so I shouldn't ask.

15 December 9, 2022, in Rhode Island, the
16 Rhode Island Department of Health breaks ground on
17 its new \$81.7 million CDC-funded health lab.
18 Paraphrasing Upton Sinclair again, now taking a
19 little bit of license. It is difficult to get the
20 public health bureaucracy when its funding depends
21 on them not understanding it.

22 I don't know what your motives are. I'm
23 not connecting any dots. I'm just laying them out.
24 If you pass this regulation, nobody is going to

1 believe for a second that it's based on
2 evidence-based science. What they will see is the
3 picture from the groundbreaking with the
4 congressional delegation, the governor,
5 Rhode Island Health Department officials, and
6 whoever else from the local -- you know, the local
7 government all sitting with their ceremonial
8 shovels throwing dirt around.

9 You have failed to prove that masks work,
10 and yet you've proposed to put forth a regulation
11 that gives you the power on a whim, basically, to
12 enact a mask mandate any time you would like. But
13 you can't prove that they work. And we're going to
14 spend another segment of time after my speech
15 looking at all of the evidence.

16 Through history, there has never been a
17 study, other than Pima, Arizona, which is now
18 thoroughly discredited and questioned, that proves
19 that masking works on any airborne illness. Good
20 luck getting that through. Thank you.

21 MR. GARCEAU: Okay. Thank you, everybody,
22 for your testimony. And at this time, we will
23 begin the next segment of this hearing. So we will
24 be calling on those who the Plaintiffs have asked

1 to speak on their behalf, and we will start with
2 Dr. Andrew Bostom.

3 MR. BOSTOM: Do I need this? Can you hear
4 me without the microphone?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There is the photo.

6 MR. BOSTOM: I wanted to start talking.
7 Can everyone hear me without the mike?

8 MR. FORD: It's better with the mike.

9 MS. LeCLAIRE: Do you want me to hold it?

10 MR. BOSTOM: I'm good. Can you hear me?

11 So I am very, very humbled by what I've
12 heard for the last several hours. And actually,
13 you know, it's a shame, I see Ms. Comella is still
14 here, but Ms. Goulette, if I have that right, is
15 not. She was the deputy --

16 MS. GOULETTE: I'm right here.

17 MR. BOSTOM: Oh, you are here.

18 MS. GOULETTE: I just needed water.

19 MR. BOSTOM: That's good. I'm glad you
20 got water. Because actually I'm very impressed
21 with the knowledge base of the audience. I think
22 as far as the RIDOT people here, I hope this
23 basically serves as continuing medical education
24 for you. Because I didn't see any of these data

1 discussed by you in public, certainly, and maybe
2 not in private either. We have some APRA requests
3 in to see about that.

4 But what I did see is very reminiscent of
5 Soviet -- Soviet pseudoscience called Lysenkoism.
6 Trofim Lysenko believed that -- Ellen, you can
7 switch to the next one. Trofim Lysenko believed
8 that acquired traits are inherited. He claimed
9 that heredity can be changed by educating plants
10 and denied the existence of genes. And he was
11 supported by Stalin and the communist party elites.

12 And one of the consequences of this
13 pseudoscience was that real scientists wound up in
14 the Gulag and some of whom were assassinated and
15 set back Soviet science. And we saw a lot of that
16 same sort of pseudoscience during the pandemic.

17 Next slide, Ellen. I want to walk you
18 back through what happened. How did we get into
19 this situation? Lockdowns, mask mandates, just
20 various other Draconian measures. You can still
21 watch this on C-SPAN if you wish. On
22 April 16, 2020, there was a live presser that
23 Governor Raimono gave. Maybe you can make out
24 Dr. Scott being at her side. And this was the

1 release of models, models done by RIDOH and
2 Brown University.

3 And I'll show you a picture -- I wish we
4 had a bigger screen, but we don't. But you can
5 hear from what -- Governor Raimondo --
6 then-Governor Raimondo was saying she's ecstatic
7 about these models that are being put out. Again,
8 April 16th. And she'll tell you that a blue line
9 you can think of as our best guess, and then
10 there's a red line. Maybe you'll be able to make
11 that out, but I'll give you the numbers if you
12 can't.

13 Next slide, Ellen. Okay. So you might be
14 able to see that huge peak, the red line there, and
15 then below that is the blue line. And then I did a
16 little graphic on the other side. You can see that
17 orange line shooting all the way up into the
18 heavens. Those are all -- those are all model
19 data. The real data are along the baseline. And
20 so what we have here is absolutely hysterical
21 models in pretty much real-time.

22 These are not models that were put forth
23 in January or February to predict what was going to
24 happen at the end of April or the beginning of May.

1 These were two-week models, two weeks later. And
2 what they predicted was on April 27th, in the less
3 compliant situation, where people were not adhering
4 to the Draconian restrictions, there would be 4,300
5 persons in the hospital with -- because of COVID.

6 Now realize, we only have about a
7 2,200-bed capacity for the state. So they would
8 have doubled that capacity and, obviously, would
9 have had to go into field hospitals.

10 On the 27th, the actual number of people
11 hospitalized was 356. In the good compliance
12 model, there were supposed to be, on May 3rd, 2,250
13 patients hospitalized because of COVID. And in
14 actuality, there were 350. And where was the peak?
15 The peak was neither at 4,300 or 2,250. It was the
16 peak -- the actual peak was 373 on April 28th,
17 during this first wave.

18 Next slide, please. In retrospect, we can
19 now go back and compare the prepandemic
20 hospitalizations, actual hospitalizations. Not
21 these hysterical and ridiculous models. By the
22 way, for which there was never an explanation,
23 never mind a mea culpa in real-time. We shouldn't
24 be talking about these models four years later. We

1 should have been talking about them in May of 2020.

2 Why were they six to twelvefold off in real-time?

3 And so all I'm showing here is that, if
4 you look at the largest health provider in the
5 state, which is Lifespan, if you look at the
6 prepandemic years of 2018 and 2019 and compare
7 those to the first two years of 2020 and '21,
8 actual hospitalizations were almost 10 percent
9 lower. Actual hospitalizations were 10 percent
10 lower.

11 And, in fact, as we've presented during
12 Southwell v. McKee, right before -- right before
13 the hearings began, towards the end of August, the
14 other largest -- the second largest provider in the
15 state, Care New England, had a conference call.
16 Because they're public, they have to have these
17 public conference calls. They had a campaign to
18 bring patients back into the hospital. Okay. So
19 there was not a crisis vis-a-vis beds.

20 Next slide, please. Well, one country and
21 probably the only country in the so-called
22 developed world that handled the pandemic
23 appropriately was Sweden. Sweden never locked
24 down, they never imposed mask mandates, and they

1 kept in class primary school education schools open
2 throughout.

3 Their national demographer, who handles
4 the mortality statistics, gave a presentation on
5 Swedish national television. And I apologize, it's
6 hard to make out here. But the major points he's
7 showing are the horrific 1918 pandemic, which was a
8 serious pandemic. Orders of magnitude worse than
9 COVID. And then you see also World War II and you
10 see two flu pandemics in 1968 and in 1957 before
11 that. And then you see coronavirus all the way
12 towards the end.

13 And what Dr. Hemstrom points out is that,
14 at worst, we are back to mortality of 2012. The
15 excess mortality was the same it was a decade
16 before COVID. And it paled in comparison to what
17 happened in the 1918 flu pandemic.

18 Next slide, please. Look, we have simple
19 metrics. We have simple metrics for death in
20 relation to infectious diseases. We have something
21 called the infection fatality rate. And these are
22 the best data that have been pooled by Ioannidis'
23 group at Stanford University. Ioannidis is the
24 most published epidemiologist in the world. And

1 very serious methodology was applied to world data
2 that were pooled into Stanford.

3 And what we can see here is that this was
4 an extraordinarily age-stratified disease that all
5 the serious risk was conferred in people over
6 70 years of age. Conversely, that means that
7 94 percent of the world's population experienced
8 SARS-CoV-2 as perhaps a pandemic flu or even a bad
9 seasonal influenza. And that those people should
10 not have been locked down, and they should have
11 been allowed to circulate and work.

12 And by the time you get down to children,
13 it is an extraordinarily mild disease, mercifully.
14 And we're talking about, even at its worst, maybe
15 one death per 335,000 infections, and by the time
16 we get to Omicron, it's maybe one death for over a
17 million infections.

18 Next slide, please. And this bears itself
19 out in U.S. data. These are over half a million
20 COVID-hospitalizations. And just very basically,
21 you can see that two-thirds of them are --
22 two-thirds of those who died are in people with
23 about six chronic comorbidities. Those are not
24 children going to school. And that more than

1 three-fourths of them are in people that were above
2 65 years old. Again, very age-stratified disease.

3 Next line, please. What about here in
4 Rhode Island? 78 percent of the deaths occurred
5 among those greater than 70; 55 percent of the
6 deaths occurred in those among 80, which is
7 actually above the State's average life expectancy
8 at birth at 79.8; 53 percent of deaths occurred in
9 nursing homes or elder-assisted living facility
10 residents; and no deaths, as we've heard here from
11 these informed people -- you informed people, no
12 deaths occurred in those under 18 during the period
13 of the pandemic. And, in fact, if you look at CDC
14 data, there were 269 non-COVID pediatric deaths
15 from the beginning of 2020 to about April 2022. So
16 this was -- this was inconsequential in
17 Rhode Island children.

18 And, in fact, this is occurring -- we also
19 have CDC data which indicates that using zero
20 prevalence data, using antibody testing in
21 representative samples of Rhode Island children,
22 the entire state's population of children was
23 infected by extrapolation. So with the entire
24 state's population of children, at some point

1 during the pandemic, being infected, there wasn't a
2 single death. By the way, there were three
3 pediatric deaths in about one flu season with the
4 H1N1 swine flu 2009 to '10.

5 And I will also -- well, Greg will
6 elaborate on this. Dr. McDonald, a leg of the
7 Department of the Health, actually perjured himself
8 over the issue of COVID-19 deaths during
9 Southwell v. McKee.

10 Next slide, please. So about masking.
11 Well, the CDC was actually pretty clear as late as
12 February 27, 2020, that they did not recommend
13 masking. And as I will show you, absolutely
14 nothing happened that should have changed that
15 opinion, that recommendation on the basis of what's
16 gold-standard evidence, i.e., randomized control
17 trials.

18 Next slide, please. We've known that
19 masking is a feckless, pointless thing to do for
20 over a hundred years. This was a very honest
21 mea culpa that I picked out of the
22 American Journal of Public Health. It was written
23 by Dr. Kellogg, who was an infectious disease
24 expert and executive officer of the California

1 State Board of Health. He was reflecting back on
2 what had happened during 1918. And it was an
3 honest mea culpa, something that we would like to
4 hear from RIDOH, for example.

5 And what he said was, "The failure of the
6 mask was a source of disappointment for the first
7 experiment in San Francisco was watched with
8 interest with the expectation that if it proved
9 feasible to enforce the regulation, the desired
10 result would be achieved. The reverse proved true.
11 The masks, contrary to expectation, were worn
12 cheerfully and universally. And also contrary to
13 expectation of what should follow under such
14 circumstances, no effect on the epidemic curve was
15 to be seen. Something was plainly wrong with our
16 hypotheses." Wouldn't you all like to hear that?

17 Okay. Next slide, please. This is a very
18 simple graphic. Again, it's from RIDOH data. Just
19 looking at all the mask mandates and re-ups of the
20 mask mandates. And they bear absolutely no
21 relationship to the infection curve. In fact, you
22 see the huge spike occurring, when according to a
23 marketing survey that was done across the country,
24 but including Rhode Island, at the point at which

1 Rhode Island was the most mask compliant of all
2 50 states, that's right before we see this huge
3 uptick in infections.

4 Next slide, please. So what kind of data
5 should the Department of Health have relied upon,
6 which it clearly ignored, rejected? I don't know
7 why. Again, it's the subject of APRA questions.

8 Well, we've known for 60, 70 years that
9 the gold standard for looking at therapeutics and
10 interventions is a randomized control trial.

11 Campbell and Stanley discussed this in terms of
12 agricultural research back in 1963 and re-upping
13 this idea as recently as 2008 was paid for by an
14 evidence-based group down in Canada, Guyatt, et al.

15 And the idea is that if you're going to
16 engage in drug treatment, surgical treatment, or
17 something as simple as a mask, never alone
18 mandating a mask, you have to have gold standard,
19 randomized control trial evidence. And, in fact,
20 when you have it, when it's consistent -- say, for
21 example, randomized control trials actually showed
22 that masking worked, at that point, you would make
23 it a recommendation. Not a mandate. As I will
24 show you, we didn't come close to that.

1 Next slide, please. So what was known in
2 terms of randomized control trial data at the
3 outset, at the very outset of the COVID pandemic?
4 This is just one example of meta-analysis, a pooled
5 analysis of randomized control trials of masking in
6 the community for the prevention of influenza. All
7 the individual studies are negative. And then
8 sometimes, because there can be small trends in
9 these individual studies, they pool the data and
10 see if, well, maybe now that we have more numbers,
11 more statistical power we can show a small trend.

12 The meta-analysis was negative, and this
13 involved about 12,000 persons. All these data were
14 available before COVID. And, in fact, that's
15 probably why the CDC initially, you know,
16 recommended against mask mandates and masking.
17 And, in fact, influenza and COVID behave exactly
18 the same. They're almost exactly the same particle
19 size.

20 Next slide, please. And this is just to
21 validate that there was one large study that was
22 actually published during the pandemic
23 reiterating -- in influential patients. These were
24 amongst Hajj pilgrims. So the other pool of data

1 was about 12,000. This was another 6,000. And,
2 again, the same thing in one study of
3 Hajj pilgrims actually showed that masks had no
4 benefit in terms of preventing primarily influenza
5 but other respiratory viruses. And, in fact, there
6 was some small suggestion that didn't reach
7 statistical significance that they might actually
8 increase the rates of infection.

9 Next slide, please. I'm back to the CDC
10 recommendation from right as the pandemic was
11 breaking. And by FOIA request, we now know from
12 Dr. Fouci's emails that he was very much aware of
13 the negative randomized control trial data from
14 influenza. And, in fact, had gotten a
15 prepublication accepted version of that
16 meta-analysis of flu that I showed you, which
17 actually was published in one of the CDC
18 house-relevant journals.

19 Next slide, please. Now, for many
20 years we've relied upon something called the
21 Cochrane database. What Cochrane does is provide
22 medical review syntheses. Now, if it's an area
23 where it's a common clinical concern -- surgical
24 interventions, medical interventions,

1 pharmaceutical interventions, and actually masking,
2 too, they -- they will rely upon randomized control
3 trial data. If it's some esoteric condition, where
4 it's been difficult to study with randomized
5 control trials, they will resort to looking at
6 observational studies.

7 So Cochrane has been reviewing masking for
8 well before COVID. As a matter of fact, they
9 started doing a synthetic literature publications
10 in the early 2000s. They came out with a
11 meta-analysis, a pooled analysis right before COVID
12 broke. All of these were negative. Again, these
13 were just randomized control trials, does community
14 masking prevent respiratory virus infection. But
15 then they actually came out, finally, in 2023, the
16 beginning of 2023, and they updated to review the
17 literature from COVID as well, and they found that,
18 for prevention of COVID-like illness or prevention
19 of laboratory-confirmed infections, the masks were
20 completely ineffective.

21 I can tell you now that there are two
22 additional studies since the negative Cochrane
23 review was published that have come out and have
24 confirmed the same thing. And now they've moved

1 into showing that N95s are no more effective than
2 surgical masks. The Cochrane reviews that I
3 mentioned before were comparing medical surgical
4 masks to no masks. So if A equals B and B
5 equals C, then A equals C. They all don't work.

6 And we just had the largest study ever
7 conducted that actually involved children. There
8 is a very interesting history to this study. This
9 was done in West Africa in Guinea-Bissau. It's a
10 40,000-person study. It actually included 10,000
11 children between the ages of 10 and 18. And none
12 of the subgroups benefited from masking. There was
13 actually even a suggestion of increased risk in the
14 masking groups.

15 And during Southwell v. McKee, as the
16 Plaintiffs remember well and certainly
17 Greg Piccirilli remembers well, Greg raised that
18 study. It was actually completed but unpublished
19 at the time, during the court hearing.

20 He mentioned the study to Dr. McDonald,
21 and Dr. McDonald told Greg, under oath, that it was
22 unethical to do the study. In other words, just
23 mask the children because we know it works. It's
24 unethical to do the study.

1 Well, you know, thank God the
2 University of South Denmark and one of the
3 outstanding infectious disease epidemiologists in
4 the world, Christine Stabell Benn, got a grant and
5 completed the study; and it's absolutely negative,
6 and we have it in our body of negative literature.
7 Very consistent.

8 One of the things that I found -- this is
9 from 2019. Next slide, please. This was very
10 disturbing to me. I am very upset that I -- you
11 know, it was published in not a high-impact
12 journal, but this was actually a study done and
13 published in 2019. It was done by Brown and RIDOH
14 investigators. And they published a peer-reviewed
15 study in a journal called Medical Care. And they
16 actually used and praised profusely the Cochrane
17 reviews as a tool for teaching, quote, expert
18 guidance to community partners in evidence
19 synthesis.

20 And if you've seen some of the discussions
21 by CDC, by RIDOH people, when the Cochrane review
22 on masking came out in 2023, it was all negative
23 commentary and deriding it. This is beyond
24 hypocrisy to have actually published this study

1 only less than six months before the
2 pandemic -- before the pandemic was really evident,
3 and a short time later disavowed the Cochrane
4 review because it didn't give the answer that they
5 wanted. That's the only explanation for it. And
6 it's grotesque hypocrisy.

7 Next slide, please, Ellen. So what did
8 RIDOH rely upon in the end? What did they rely
9 upon? We saw this -- we saw this in court. They
10 ignored the gold-standard evidence. They utterly
11 ignored the gold-standard negative evidence, which
12 would have told you mask mandates are useless, and
13 you don't mandate something that's useless. That's
14 unethical.

15 So what did they rely upon? You heard
16 Rich talk about the Pima study. Actually, if you
17 look between 2019 and 2023, there was just a paper
18 published last month in the American Journal of
19 Medicine, reviewed all of the studies between 2019
20 and 2023 in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports,
21 which is the CDC-specific house organ. It is a
22 non-peer reviewed journal.

23 I don't understand why people in RIDOH
24 didn't understand that, but we presented it in

1 court, and they protested. They realized it's not
2 peer-reviewed. It's only reviewed internally
3 within CDC. That is not outside peer reviewed.
4 Regardless, 77 masking studies, none of which was a
5 randomized control trial.

6 And I just want to read you from this
7 published paper just last month in the American
8 Journal of Medicine. "We found that while less
9 than 20 percent of MMWR studies pertaining to masks
10 generated any statical evidence of mask
11 effectiveness and no randomized controlled
12 investigations were published, more than 75 percent
13 of the publications arrived at a favorable
14 conclusion about using masks and 70 percent of
15 studies testing masks used causal language.
16 Similarly, language about the studies'
17 implications, including the importance of masking,
18 was used in multiple publications despite lack of
19 supporting evidence."

20 This was the entire flimsy, ridiculous,
21 counterfactual body of evidence that RIDOH used to
22 justify mask mandates. But as the late Billy Mays
23 would say, "But there's more."

24 As they pointed out, a number of studies

1 were particularly influential in shaping policy
2 recommendations around masking in public and
3 schools. They were not even among the studies that
4 attempted to properly evaluate masks, as they had
5 no control group or comparative time period. These
6 studies included the investigation of Missouri
7 hairdressers, which came up in the trial; the
8 Georgia overnight-camp outbreak investigation; and
9 the Marin County, California, school investigation.

10 Next slide, please. So my colleague,
11 Michelle Cretella, who is a pediatrician in the
12 state, was going to talk about negative effects of
13 masking, and she couldn't be here so I'll run
14 through it very quickly. And, again, we all know
15 that Judge Lanphear gave his ruling, which was a
16 little oddly worded. He said that -- he said that
17 the masking caused, "some irreparable harm."

18 Okay. So we know from the SARS-CoV-1
19 pandemic and the heavy use of masking in Asia that
20 there was a report in 2023 that, because of vast
21 discomfort and distraction, it was causing social
22 isolation in children. And that was for a very
23 brief period of time. That was only a couple of
24 months of masking.

1 Fast-forward to 2019, there was a
2 randomized control crossover study of N95 masking
3 in children that found within five minutes -- five
4 minutes -- masking significantly raised blood CO2
5 concentrations versus a controlled, five-minute
6 period when unmasked.

7 And then in terms of some of the things --
8 we heard some very interesting discussion this
9 morning by people with teaching and clinical
10 psychology backgrounds. This was a controlled
11 study that would confirm some of what they are
12 reporting. This was a study of 72 children, age
13 6 to 14 years old. And they applied this
14 instrument called a Cambridge Face Memory Test,
15 which is a validated measure of face perception
16 performance.

17 And what they found was that substantial
18 quantitative and qualitative alterations in the
19 processing of masked faces in school-aged children
20 as a result of masking, which could have
21 significant effects on children's social
22 interactions with their peers and their ability to
23 form relationships with educators. And I think
24 we've seen facts on the ground bear that out.

1 In terms of educational measures, we've
2 got enough data now to show that the pandemic
3 response was a disaster and part and parcel of that
4 was masking. We've seen test scores, both here in
5 Rhode Island and across the United States,
6 significantly decline during the pandemic. And I
7 don't think that that needs to be, you know,
8 reiterated any further. What I would like to show
9 in contrast -- next slide, please.

10 MS. SCHAFFER: After that?

11 MR. BOSTOM: Yes. Sorry. The opposite.
12 Sweden, again, through at least age 16, opened
13 schools, face-to-face education, no masking. No
14 negative consequences in terms of educating school
15 children. No COVID-19-related learning loss in
16 reading in Swedish primary school students. The
17 proportion students with weak reading skills did
18 not increase during the pandemic, and students from
19 disadvantage socioeconomic backgrounds were not
20 especially affected. And contrary to ridiculous
21 stereotypes, Sweden is no longer, you know,
22 lily-white Nordic country. It has had an amnesty
23 policy for asylum for 30-plus years now. It has a
24 very large Middle Eastern and African minority

1 population. And they did not experience declines
2 in their educational measures either.

3 Next slide, please. So masking just fits
4 into a larger context of this Lysenkoism that was
5 imposed upon us, in plain English. And we need to
6 return to much more intelligent and thoughtful and
7 experiential wisdom.

8 And the late Donald Henderson was, for
9 many years, dean of the Johns Hopkins School of
10 Public Health. He was -- he spearheaded the
11 campaign to eradicate a true scourge, smallpox. I
12 mean, smallpox had a 20 to 60 percent fatality
13 persisting at least at 15 to 30 percent into the
14 last century. That was a real scourge. That was
15 not this flu-like experience that we had with
16 COVID.

17 And perhaps that sobered him up to the
18 idea of how you would plan for influenza outbreaks,
19 even pandemic influenza outbreaks. And he was
20 against every single thing that we did during the
21 pandemic. Quarantining the well, mask mandates,
22 closing schools, other than for maybe a week or
23 two. Every single thing that we did, he was
24 opposed to. And because of the societal

1 disruption -- next slide, please -- what he said
2 was -- and I think it happened in front of our
3 eyes -- he said a model for epidemic could make for
4 a catastrophe. And so this is the type of tried
5 and true wisdom we have to get back to.

6 And my final slide. This is not a
7 position of compromise. Okay. We -- we want --
8 we're supposed to be -- the least we should expect
9 from the Department of Health is that they abide by
10 actual evidence-based medicine. Period, end of
11 discussion, no compromise. So with the permission
12 of the Plaintiffs, I put simple language onto it.

13 There will be no regulation requiring
14 masking in schools for the alleged prevention of
15 respiratory viral infections until evidence of both
16 their effectiveness and lack of harm has been
17 demonstrated convincingly by multiple, rigorous,
18 randomized control trials in school-aged children,
19 published in peer-reviewed journals. And that's
20 got to be the bottom line. The rest is bullshit,
21 as they say. Okay. Thank you very much.

22 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Thank you. Our
23 next speaker is Jennifer Lebeau.

24 MS. LEBEAU: Sorry, I already spoke.

1 MR. GARCEAU: Sorry about that. All
2 right. So then it is Gregory Piccirilli.

3 MR. PICCIRILLI: It's been a long day.
4 Whenever we're ready, or all set?

5 MS. LeCLAIRE: Yup.

6 MR. PICCIRILLI: Well, I want to thank
7 everybody, for the last people here and for their
8 persistence in sticking this out. It's been a long
9 day. Can you hear me okay?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

11 MR. PICCIRILLI: So before I start, I just
12 want to give a bit of summary of how we got here.
13 And we filed this lawsuit on behalf of originally
14 37 parents. During the course of the trial,
15 hundreds of parents contributed, if not directly as
16 Plaintiffs but financial support and moral support.

17 And the lawsuit began in September of '21,
18 shortly after the governor issued his executive
19 order requiring mask mandates in public schools.
20 This is just a small sample of the legal filings
21 we've had to deal with in the last two-and-a-half
22 years. We had a complaint that was hundredes of
23 pages long because I had every parent write a
24 statement of the impact that the masking was having

1 on their children. I attached exhibits.

2 One of the things that struck me at the
3 beginning of the executive order and right before
4 that, the then-director of the Department of
5 Health, Alexander-Scott, wrote a memo to every
6 school superintendent in the state. I happen to
7 represent a school district so I got a copy of it.
8 And in that memo, Dr. Scott referenced one study
9 that she asserted was the basis for proving that
10 masks work to stop the spread of COVID. She cited
11 a mannequin study. A study where they had six
12 mannequins sitting around a conference table, and
13 they blew air through the conference room and
14 somehow determined that wearing a mask, a manikin
15 reduced the spread of COVID by maybe 3 percent.
16 That is the study. The only study she cited to
17 public school officials.

18 It was so bad that, during the hearing on
19 the case, I asked Dr. McDonald about that because
20 he didn't cite that as a basis for his opinion that
21 masks worked. I asked him about why he didn't cite
22 that. He said, well, we don't believe that that
23 was a valid study. His own director, his own boss,
24 the one study she cited, he didn't believe in.

1 That's just a little taste of what we had to deal
2 with.

3 So we had -- so what you have here is the
4 original pleadings in the case, our motion for
5 preliminary injunction, which was denied.

6 Although, we did get a statement from the judge
7 that it was causing irreparable harm to children.

8 Trial transcripts over seven days in October of

9 '21. Exhibits, 48 for us, and 23 for the State,

10 including -- one day, attorneys from the

11 Attorney General's office come into court with five

12 boxes of these. Five of those boxes of these.

13 These were dashboards, data dashboards, printouts.

14 Every week, the Department of Health was producing

15 these. This is what they were relying upon to

16 determine how COVID was spread.

17 The interesting thing about those data

18 reports, the dashboard, was that they kept changing

19 the methodology. At one point -- for example, at

20 one point, they said something -- there was a very

21 important part of this data dashboard was the

22 estimated prevalence of infection. That somehow --

23 that data was so important that up until

24 August 16th, which is two days or three days before

1 the governor issued his executive order, they were
2 relying upon that. Suddenly, they changed the
3 modeling for that. And then, on August 31st, it
4 just disappeared from the dashboard. Why? Because
5 it didn't support their narrative.

6 There's other things that were in those
7 things. Projected community -- projected community
8 immunity. Again, Dr. McDonald said, well, we don't
9 really rely on that because we don't think natural
10 immunity really lasts that long. Why is it in the
11 model, the dashboard?

12 Projected -- 14-day projected
13 hospitalizations. Again, it appeared in that
14 dashboard from June 30th to August 9th of '21. And
15 what happened, on September 9th it said it was
16 under development, and then it completely
17 disappeared again.

18 One of the big factors in that dashboard
19 that Dr. McDonald kept relying upon was what's
20 something called a NEDOCS score. That represents
21 overcrowding in emergency rooms. And you might
22 have remembered of hearing this. Oh, the hospitals
23 are going to be overwhelmed. That was one of the
24 bases for the executive order in August of '21.

1 In fact, in that executive order,
2 Governor McKee said, we're opening a satellite
3 field hospital, the old Davol Building in Cranston.
4 We're going to have 200 hospital beds in there for
5 the overflow. Not one person ever went in that
6 place. Not one.

7 At one point, Dr. McDonald said that the
8 emergency rooms were so overcrowded that they were
9 rolling diversions. I asked him for evidence of
10 that. He could never produce it.

11 You heard -- what other exhibits do we
12 have? Well, again, you heard about the MMWRs.
13 Dr. Bostom's already referenced that these are
14 basically house organs for the CDC. You don't get
15 published in the MMWR unless you toe the party
16 line. All right.

17 Having said that, one of the MMWRs was a
18 study out of Marin County, which Dr. McDonald
19 referenced. I do trial work. If I put an expert
20 on the stand and they said they've done a study
21 that conclusively proves something or pretty
22 closely conclusively proves that, and then I read
23 the study and I read this, "Challenges in testing
24 acceptance among possible contacts from outside the

1 school led to difficulty in characterizing the
2 outbreak's actual spread in the community, as is
3 evidenced by later discovery of additional
4 community cases with sequences indistinguishable
5 from those in the school outbreak." In short, the
6 study that they claimed showed that masking in
7 schools worked was confounded by the fact that it
8 didn't. The evidence didn't support that.

9 So, again, all of the MMWR reports that
10 were cited were observational or epidemiological
11 studies. They were not randomized controlled trial
12 studies. What is the fundamental problem with an
13 observational study? Confirmation bias. One of
14 the studies relied upon by the State that they put
15 into evidence was a Facebook survey of people who
16 wanted -- tell us about your wearing the mask. Did
17 it make you feel better? Do you think it made you
18 healthier? Oh, yeah. Is that the evidence that
19 you want to rely upon for imposing such a mask
20 mandate?

21 Curiously, towards the end of the hearing,
22 I got Dr. McDonald to agree that he suffered from
23 confirmation bias. He admitted that he was looking
24 at studies that support his belief that masks work

1 and would discount studies that did the opposite.

2 One of the most egregious things he did
3 was at the very end of the trial when we tried to
4 get him to at least admit that kids were suffering
5 some harm, could you at least admit that as a human
6 being. And he said, well, you know, I think kids
7 really enjoy wearing masks. What do you base that
8 on? Well, I read this study out of China recently.
9 He testified to that under oath. An unnamed,
10 unpublished report from China. Why was he so
11 infatuated with China? I'll get there. I'll get
12 there.

13 What else is over here? Well, we have
14 post -- after we have the trial, we file briefs,
15 the judge issues his decision. We appealed it to
16 the Supreme Court on the basis of we lost. The
17 State appealed it on the basis they did not like
18 the fact that the judge found irreparable harm.
19 They really did not like that.

20 The Supreme Court decided not to take the
21 appeal so we go back to court and we go through
22 discovery. Request for production of documents,
23 interrogatories, and I did get to take two
24 depositions in the case. Those were great. Oh,

1 Ms. Comella left. Oh, she's right there.

2 Ms. Comella was one of them and Dr. McDonald was
3 the other one. I'll get to what those depositions
4 said in a moment.

5 What else was in this packet? The State
6 filed not one, but two motions to dismiss the case
7 as moot. The problems with their motions were,
8 that when the judge asked them, are you telling me
9 that the State will never impose a mask mandate
10 ever again, their answer was no. Then the case
11 isn't moot. In fact, the first motion they
12 filed -- while that motion was pending, in May of
13 2022, after the State mandate was over, the
14 Rhode Island Department of Health sent out a memo
15 to every school. And in the memo it said, if
16 there's been exposure, your child must wear a mask
17 for five days.

18 So I filed an emergency motion. We go
19 before the judge, and the State says, oh, no, no,
20 no, that's not -- we don't know where that came
21 from. So I asked Dr. McDonald in his deposition
22 about, "must." And what his answer to me was, that
23 must doesn't mean it's required. It means it's a
24 recommendation.

1 The word, "must," appeared in that memo
2 four times. And every time, Dr. McDonald's answer
3 was, no. If an administrator or a parent reads to
4 mean it's a requirement, they must be an idiot.
5 That's not what that means. This is the top public
6 health official at the Rhode Island Department of
7 Health. The person who was in charge of the COVID
8 response. At the time, I think he had just left as
9 the acting director of the Department of Health.
10 And he wants you people to believe that, "must,"
11 means, "recommended." Talk about Soviet-era
12 doublespeak.

13 Ultimately, the judge denied the motions
14 to dismiss, kept going on with discovery, and,
15 ultimately, we started engaging in settlement
16 discussions. And I just want to give one shout-out
17 to somebody who I don't know what happened to him.
18 He was the chief legal counsel for the Department
19 of Health, Kenny Alston.

20 I tremendously enjoyed working with him in
21 getting the settlement done. Unfortunately, he
22 left the Department, and I don't know where he
23 went. But I wish I could say thank you to him if
24 he's out there because he's the one that helped us

1 get this settled.

2 So what else did -- what else is it that
3 we talked about in this discovery? Okay. So now
4 we're here. And what's the purpose of this
5 hearing? Well, the most important thing I think
6 that's coming from this hearing is everything that
7 you've said, everything that we've submitted,
8 anything that people have submitted online is now
9 permanently and forever in the records at the
10 Secretary of State's office.

11 If the State ever tries to impose a mask
12 mandate again, I don't care what the wording of
13 this regulation ultimately says, if they ever try
14 to do it again, even under an emergency, we don't
15 have to go through a nine-day trial again. We
16 don't have to go through two-and-a-half years of
17 litigation again hopefully. We will now have a
18 record that says inconclusively -- I'm sorry --
19 conclusively that masking doesn't work, that
20 masking is harmful, and that you don't want it. I
21 don't know how they're going to get around that.

22 They have to -- they have to make a
23 recommendation to their boss. They have to come up
24 with a final regulation. They have to somehow

1 explain why they don't have to listen to your
2 science or the science, that there's some other
3 science out there. Or perhaps they'll say what the
4 CDC director -- former director Rochelle Walensky
5 said, that it's not equipoise. That everybody
6 knows masks work.

7 We don't need science. What do we need
8 science for? It's not equipoise. It's like
9 jumping out of an airplane with a parachute.
10 Everybody knows parachutes work. She actually
11 testified to that before Congress as an excuse why
12 the CDC would not do any randomized control trials
13 of masking.

14 Remember the airline masks that were
15 required? There was a case that came out right as
16 we were arguing our motion to dismiss in May of
17 '22. A brave judge in Tampa, Florida, federal
18 judge, after a trial, struck down that regulation,
19 and struck it down for the same reasons this
20 regulation should have been struck down.

21 The federal government, under the
22 Federal Administrative Procedures Act, has a
23 similar kind of emergency regulation provision
24 where they can issue an emergency regulation for

1 good cause.

2 One of the things that the judge
3 referenced in her decision is the emergency had
4 been declared for two years by then. Two years.
5 When are you going to do your study? When are you
6 going to have normal regulatory hearings?

7 There's a quote in her decision where she
8 says, This public participation is extremely
9 important when developing health regulations,
10 particularly when it imposes upon your personal
11 autonomy, forcing you to wear something. And the
12 CDC had no explanation, no answer as to why they
13 hadn't done any studies, any public hearings on
14 airline masking.

15 So I'm going to end now with a couple of
16 things that -- the head of COVID response,
17 Dr. McDonald, and acting health director at some
18 point, testified in his deposition -- maybe this is
19 why he was so infatuated with China. He had given
20 an interview in March of '22, right before our
21 deposition in July of '22, to something called a
22 Rhode Map or some local newspaper.

23 And in that, he boasted that he thought
24 that he was able to change the culture in this

1 country and in this state. And I asked him about
2 that. What did you mean by that? And he said, I
3 think masks are going to be a part of our culture
4 and be more liked in our culture. I think they are
5 part of our culture now, and they will stay that
6 way for a long time.

7 He wasn't trying to follow the science.
8 He was trying to impose his view of what culture
9 should be. He goes on, boasting about he saw some
10 people hiking in the woods with masks on, and he
11 thought that was just great. He said, if someone's
12 wearing a mask outside hiking in the woods, I
13 wonder why they're doing that. Maybe it's because
14 they have allergies and don't want to have a
15 problem with pollen. I don't know. People wear
16 masks in our future. It is part of our culture
17 now.

18 What culture is he talking about?
19 Dr. McDonald served some time in the Navy in Japan.
20 And in this article, he talked about how he admired
21 Japan because they have a culture of mask wearing,
22 unlike us. So I asked him about that. I said,
23 while you were in Japan, would you notice that
24 people would wear masks if they had a cold, if they

1 went outside; is that what you witnessed? And his
2 answer was, it's very common in the Orient. I
3 asked him, the Orient? He said, well, it's very
4 common in Japan, very common in China, very common
5 in other parts of the Orient. Very common in
6 cultures that value others more than individuals.

7 Dr. McDonald is a closet communist. He
8 doesn't believe in individual rights. He believes
9 in collective rights. And he imposed that on this
10 Department of Health.

11 I know there are people in that Department
12 that don't agree with that. And I know there are
13 people that -- to borrow from the Japanese phrase,
14 the soldiers of -- the Japanese soldiers who were
15 stranded on an island in the 1970s and still
16 thought World War II was going on. Like
17 Dead Enders.

18 I sincerely hope that the rational people
19 at the Department of Health do not try to impose
20 your view of what culture should be, your view of
21 collectivism over the rights of the individual.
22 That's not your role. If you want to do that, run
23 for governor.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: On the communist

1 party ticket.

2 MR. PICCIRILLI: Lastly -- Andy's making
3 me do this -- just to show you what a complete
4 mockery our state has become nationally.
5 Dan Bongino has a national radio show. Somebody
6 sent him a video -- an audio of my deposition of
7 Dr. McDonald. I don't know who did it. It wasn't
8 me.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hold it up to the
10 mike.

11 MR. PICCIRILLI: This is what he said.

12 (AUDIO PLAYED)

13 MR. PICCIRILLI: Thank you.

14 MR. GARCEAU: All right. Before we
15 conclude, we actually had one other person who had
16 signed up to speak, and we'll have time now.
17 Amy Rodriguez. I'm not sure if she is still here.

18 MS. MILLER: I'll speak. My name is
19 Denise Miller. Initially, I was on the initial
20 complaint as anonymous because, at the time, I was
21 afraid to speak up. I was afraid of being
22 retributed against at my workplace, in public,
23 other parents, but I'm here to say that -- so I
24 have two kids that are -- that attend public school

1 in Tiverton. Olivia, she's a fifth grader at TMS;
2 and Owen, who is a second grader at Ranger.

3 This hearing is four years too late. The
4 irreparable harm that masks has caused my children
5 is just that, it's not reversible. You cannot take
6 back the four years of education loss, the mental
7 and emotional detriment it has caused.

8 When my son first started kindergarten in
9 2021/2022 school year, he had never had to wear a
10 mask prior to that, not even at day care.

11 Thankfully, the day care he attended at the time,
12 they did not impose a mask mandate on our children.
13 At least they had children's best interests in
14 mind.

15 When he started kindergarten, he had to
16 wear a mask for six hours a day. He struggled
17 significantly. He would come home with holes
18 bitten in his mask. I asked him, why do you have a
19 hole in your mask? And he said, well, mommy, I
20 cannot breathe. And I ask to take a mask break. I
21 pull down my mask, but my teacher says I have to
22 pull it back up. That's -- I don't even understand
23 that. That's just crazy.

24 This policy has no business being

1 implemented. If you implement this policy, can you
2 assure that our children will not suffer? Can you
3 assure that irreparable harm will not be caused on
4 healthy children? Will you allow parents choice?
5 Can you guarantee that our children will not be
6 bullied by adults?

7 I am a veteran of the United States
8 Air Force. I served a six-month tour in
9 Afghanistan and a four-month tour in Saudi Arabia.
10 I fought for other countries to have the basic
11 human rights to be free of oppression. I refuse to
12 allow this to happen in my country.

13 I sacrificed nine years to serve my
14 country, and I refuse to let anyone to take away my
15 freedom, my children's freedom, and anybody else on
16 U.S. soil. This proposed policy should stop here
17 and never be brought back again. Never again.

18 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And is there
19 anybody else who would like to speak at this time?

20 MS. TIBITS: Thank you again, everybody,
21 for coming out today. I think that you are all
22 heros just for showing up, when so many others
23 couldn't.

24 And to the Department of Health, in

1 Alberta, Canada, one of the head's of government
2 there was known as the first public official in the
3 entire world who decided to issue a public apology
4 for how citizens were treated during the lockdown.
5 How unvaccinated people were treated. And they
6 apologized for the mandates. And an apology
7 definitely won't undo all of the harm that's been
8 done, but I think it's a great first step, and I
9 think it would go a long way if you just simply
10 apologize and recognize the fact that you got a lot
11 of things wrong. So thank you.

12 COURT REPORTER: Can you just give me your
13 name.

14 MS. TIBITS: Kara Tibits.

15 COURT REPORTER: Carol?

16 MS. TIBITS: Kara, K-A-R-A.

17 MR. GARCEAU: I'm sorry, anyone who would
18 like to speak?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Not speak. I just
20 want to ask you, could you just tell us what
21 happens next after you hear all this.

22 MS. LeCLAIRE: We review public comments
23 and then, you know --

24 COURT REPORTER: I can't hear you. I'm

1 sorry.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How will we know
3 what the decision will be?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me, I can't
5 hear you. Could you go up here.

6 MS. LeCLAIRE: We're just going to review
7 all of the public comments. That's the regulatory
8 process. And then we will, you know, adhere to the
9 APA statute as to how it should proceed.

10 MR. FORD: Question. I'm concerned -- by
11 the way, I think everybody should give this woman a
12 round of applause. I don't know how you do it, the
13 concentration, the physicality.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How long is that,
15 Tom?

16 (AUDIO FEEDBACK)

17 MR. FORD: Could you take the mike off,
18 please. Take that off that thing. I don't need to
19 be on it. I'm very concerned about the failure of
20 the State to videotape this. That wasn't something
21 I anticipated or thought about. I think we've all
22 learned in this room that we have to anticipate and
23 think on behalf of the State because sometimes the
24 State doesn't.

1 I don't know how -- and by the way, so I'm
2 formally offering the videotapes that I had
3 professionally done, as well as after the camera
4 left, to your organization because I don't know how
5 you can possibly convey the emotion, the intellect,
6 the context. All credit to this woman, but words,
7 written words do not bring forth the emotions or
8 the science that was exhibited in this room today.
9 It doesn't put the slides. It doesn't fully convey
10 the personal stories. How can you possibly make a
11 judgment?

12 MS. LeCLAIRE: Your comment is noted, and
13 we will put it as part of the public comment.

14 MR. FORD: We suffered for four years of
15 comments.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me, ma'am.
17 He just made you an offer. Did you not hear the
18 offer?

19 MR. FORD: I'm willing to supply at --
20 that was done at our expense, as is seemingly
21 everything in this process. Because even your --
22 which we value by the way. And I'll say, formally,
23 I appreciate you folks listening. But everything
24 about this effort, to the point that was made

1 several times, had to be at our expense. You're at
2 our expense. The videotaping we did was at our
3 expense. The countless hours taken away from work
4 in courtrooms was at our expense. We give, we
5 give.

6 I asked this governor, all right, at a
7 press conference, because I work in the media,
8 about the concept of shared sacrifice. That great
9 civilizations are deemed worthy by the practice of
10 shared sacrifice. I have yet to see a single bit
11 of damn sacrifice on behalf of the State, the
12 State -- their operatics who run this state, the
13 failure of our governor. I haven't seen anything.

14 So my question is twofold. To his point,
15 I'm making you a formal offer to provide your
16 organization with videotape of this hearing, which,
17 by the way, at great expense. And then I'm asking
18 if, in lieu of that, if you do not do that, how can
19 you fairly judge on our behalf? It's a question.
20 Not rhetorical.

21 MS. LeCLAIRE: Public comment has been
22 noted, sir.

23 MR. FORD: You answered it.

24 MS. SIMMONS: I just want to say one last

1 thing as a reminder, crimes against humanity --
2 crimes against humanity has -- it's in the bottom
3 line -- there is no immunity to crimes against
4 humanity. So when the sails indictments come down
5 and your names might be on them, there is no
6 immunity. It's in little print.

7 MR. GARCEAU: All right. And that
8 concludes this hearing. And we thank everyone who
9 submitted their oral testimony.

10 And if you would like to submit written
11 testimony, you can send it to me via email, and you
12 have until March 20, 2024, to do so. And thank you
13 all for your attendance and the information you've
14 offered, and this hearing is now closed.

15 (HEARING ADJOURNED AT 1:49 P.M.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Cindy M. Tangney, a Commissioner in and for the State of Rhode Island, hereby certify that the foregoing pages are a true and accurate record of my stenographic notes that were reduced to print through computer-aided transcription.

In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand this 21st day of March, 2024.



Rebecca J. Forte

CINDY M. TANGNEY, RMR

My Commission (RI) Expires on 06/30/2025

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