

January 4, 2022

Dear Commissioners,

I am **opposed** to the adoption of Resolution 2021-21 as a Health Ordinance in Charles County.

I am completely disgusted to see the continued use of County resources directed toward the imposition of masks on private citizens.

A return to masks, perhaps permanently, sends a signal to the community that we are only going backward in this nearly 2-year mental health hell rather than moving toward real normalcy.

While we may disagree on whether masks even work at stopping the transmission of respiratory viruses (Check Dr. Wen's latest comments on masks if you are unsure ¹), we can agree that there are better and more effective ways to save lives in Charles County. September 2021 was the fourth deadliest month for our jurisdiction, with masks in place.

Wouldn't focus on early treatment be a much better use of the Commissioners' time and resources? Making the availability of monoclonal antibodies widespread, advising physicians of which steroid treatments help relieve stressed airways, or even allowing physicians to prescribe off-label treatments under the principle of "Right to Try" would all respect the dignity of the human beings in our community and show true good-faith efforts to shield the vulnerable from adverse outcomes of the disease.

It has been nearly 2 years of restrictions, mask mandates, and general misery. The sense of community is lost. The trust in public health officials and our elected representatives is severely damaged.

I, and members of my family, have a bona fide health impairment or disability which makes mask-wearing difficult at best and excruciating at worst. I have been humiliated and harassed, then denied service, numerous times these past 20 months in public by ill-advised business owners or managers who do not understand exemptions to a mandate. A few examples are below.

One of the worst experiences of bullying was in February 2021. My children, two whom have valid medical reasons not to wear a mask, were publicly bullied by the manager of the Capital Clubhouse ice skating rink. We used to skate four times a week, with three children, before shut down. Only my most passionate child wanted to return to skating consistently when they reopened. She tried to persevere and wear a mask. This became a source for panic attacks, which had never happened before. She literally said her peripheral vision was obstructed while skating backwards, leading to a bona fide safety risk. I spoke to the Department of Parks and Recreation for Charles County, Sam Drury. He said he was sorry, but no exemptions were possible (this was not in the mandate from the state- exemptions were to be made). I have email communication between Mr. Drury and myself where eventually an exemption is made, but then my oldest child (with a medical exemption) must be six feet away from everyone at a semi-private skating time (no more than 15 people on the ice from our immediate school group) INCLUDING her siblings. This was absolutely ridiculous. My daughter was ostracized, purposefully. Logic was not involved in that "accommodation." Since then, I have asked my passionate skating child if she wants to go skate. Her immediate answer is no. I can't even finish asking. She is traumatized by the response of the manager there and the ridiculousness of the situation.

Shopping in general has been horrible in this county. Fear of private citizens harassing me, loud speaker requests to "wear your masks properly," make my heart race. I do have a valid medical condition to not wear the mask. Most recently, the CVS in Target refused to serve me on Nov 3rd. They were behind plexiglass and I was more than six feet away. The pharmacy manager claimed it was a CVS store policy. Politely, I explained I was exempt and that I had received my medicines before at this location without incident. I was yelled at that it was "too bad" and I should take my business to the 301 CVS to use the drive thru. I spoke with the manager on duty at Target. They called and said the CVS manager was not receptive to a discussion, but gave the Target

manager a 1-800 number for me to call. I called CVS customer service to see if it was, in fact, store policy. It is not. The pharmacy "cares" department at CVS was baffled that a mandate was even in place as most all states had lifted any mandate and was a personal decision.

Friday, December 4th, while shopping for last minute items for my loved-one's repast, the BJs in Waldorf had signs up as it is "store policy" (which is not true per the corporate BJs website). Everything was fine until the receipt check out at the door. I placed my receipt at the end of the cart, visible to the lady. I stood on the complete opposite side of the cart, approximately six feet away to give her space. After she checked the items and receipt, she realized I was maskless and began to yell at me. I will no longer shop in any store that harasses its patrons.

This causes anxiety for myself and my children. I expend more time and money to do business outside of the county where masks are not mandated and the people around me respect my personal decision, without fear of harassment, to forego a mask.

We have also lost out on countless educational opportunities, including 4-H robotics. The mask mandate from the county caused my daughter to miss her summer educational experience including the state fair competition. As homeschoolers, there are but so many educational experiences where we can participate and the mask requirement makes it impossible. We requested to be exempt, but because the county building we used required masks, no exemptions were made. The discrimination and keeping children from education is heartbreaking.

Commissioners, this regulation is bad for our county and bad for our future. I respectfully ask that you vote NO.

Sincerely,

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1 - [Cloth masks are useless in fight against Omicron, expert warns | The Independent](#)