

David Krinsky
14805 Bauer Drive
Rockville, MD 20853

31 October 2021

Re: Proposed Amended Regulation Regarding Indoor Masking Requirements

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Andrew Friedson
Council Member, District 1

Hans Riemer
Council Member, At Large

Craig L. Rice
Council Member, District 2

Will Jawando
Council Member, At Large

Sidney Katz
Council Member, District 3

Evan Glass
Council Member, At Large

Nancy Navarro
Council Member, District 4

Gabe Albornoz
Council Member, At-Large

Thomas Hucker
Council Member, District 5

Dear County Executive Elrich and Members of the Council:

I am a resident of Montgomery County, and I write to urge the County Council, sitting as the Board of Health, to **repeal the indoor mask mandate** rather than just tweaking it.

With vaccinations now authorized for children ages 5-11, and nearly all county residents ages 12+ vaccinated (over 90% fully vaccinated, 99.9% with one dose), there is no justification for a continued mandate. Vaccines are keeping us safe. Other neighboring jurisdictions, including many in Northern Virginia and Howard County, have nearly as high a vaccination rate, *no* mask mandate, and virtually the same case rates. And the feared hospitalization crisis from the Delta variant never came.

The current prevalence-based mandate may come and go unpredictably, as this week's events have illustrated. Slowing down the yo-yo effect, by tweaking the regulation to require a week of "substantial" transmission before it comes back (as has been proposed) is an improvement, but doesn't fix the fundamental problem, which is that there is no reason to think case rates will someday become low and stay low. The current law risks on-and-off masking in perpetuity, possibly on a weekly basis.

At a bare minimum, there should be a sunset date. Now seems like an opportune time; there is no crisis that warrants the significant and constant disruption of required masks. But if the Council wishes to allow schoolchildren time to be vaccinated, another approach would be for the law to sunset automatically six weeks after vaccines for children

ages 5-11 become available, to ensure they can be fully vaccinated—say, by December 15, 2021.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. The current law is a constant annoyance and if it is not promptly repealed, I and other voters will not forget at the ballot box.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ David Krinsky

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