

**Pilon, Janet**

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**Subject:** Mandatory face coverings

**From:** James Buss

**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2020 9:43 AM

**To:** [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)

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I would like to submit the following comments for Council to consider with respect to the debate and vote on mandatory face coverings.

First, I would like to stat that I am not against face coverings per se. I have a cloth mask that I carry with me. Sometimes I wear it; sometimes I don't. As a healthy individual, it depends on the situation that I am in, whether I choose to wear it or not. Part of that consideration is how others around me would feel.

However, I do object to a blanket policy all across the entire city. In recent months we have had some of our Charter rights and freedoms stripped away from us. And that is understandable. We have been in a serious pandemic and the health of the nation certainly takes some precedence over individual rights and freedoms. However, it is incumbent on legislators and councils to justify their actions. So far, I have not seen any justification for mandatory face coverings at all times.

I would point to this article: [https://www.greenmedinfo.com/blog/should-you-wear-mask-prevent-covid-19?fbclid=IwAR1R8hyU-htL\\_eXYoYOFB8wEn9vFOXlshrKrS8a0s35y8Wt0xl4-FBCoYsc](https://www.greenmedinfo.com/blog/should-you-wear-mask-prevent-covid-19?fbclid=IwAR1R8hyU-htL_eXYoYOFB8wEn9vFOXlshrKrS8a0s35y8Wt0xl4-FBCoYsc). In it, they state several studies and published journal articles, including one in a journal published by the CDC in May where they "found no significant reduction in influenza transmission with the use of face masks" (despite the CDC urging people to wear one). If science itself is divided on the issue, how can you justify stripping away more rights from the people?

I have heard it said that a mandatory face covering by-law would be no different than a by-law that dictates that food preparation workers wash their hands after visiting the bathroom. I'm sorry, but the two are not the same. The science is clear. There is no debate. If people do not wash their hands, people will get sick. In the case of mandatory face coverings, the science is not clear. Science is still arguing over whether face coverings are helpful and if they are, how helpful they really are.

I also take note that since the number of cases spiked, the number of cases has been on the decline (only 4 new cases in Hamilton Friday (I think)). This decline has been happening, despite not having a mandatory face covering policy, even though for the last four to six weeks more establishments have been opening up and more people are getting out and about. With so few new cases and most of the cases in Hamilton now being resolved, I'm not sure what advantage a mandatory face covering policy is going to have. There possibly could be justification if we were having troubles keeping our numbers down, but Hamilton has done a fantastic job of reducing transmission without a mandatory policy, so why start now?

I read in the Mountain News in the letters section of a lady who is a survivor of domestic abuse and that one of the things that her abuser did was cover her face. Why would City Council want to support something that would re-traumatize victims of abuse? I shake my head. I do not understand.

Rather than supporting something that is highly controversial among the voting people of Hamilton that has not been conclusively proven to be beneficial at all, I would urge City Council to come out in support of something that has proven to work: **Stay home if you can. If you can't, socially distance; if you can't wear a mask.** We know this works. Hamilton has been doing this and the evidence is in the daily updates, where the numbers are coming down.

James Buss