

I am a lifelong resident of Kansas and offer this testimony in support of SB 391.

I have also lived all but about a year and a half in Atchison County.

During COVID, health professionals had a chance to shine as the spotlight was on them. Instead, the vast majority chose to lose their minds! They made a choice to ignore long-standing and proven protocols and measures in the name of science. Yes, think about that for just a moment.

As you already know, Kansas went beyond the federal recommendations. Atchison County went even further beyond Kansas' recommendations. Here are just a couple of examples:

When the country, and Kansas, was beginning to open back up, the Atchison County so-called County Health Nurse refused to allow businesses to open. It is unclear what her reasoning was, as she did not explain her position. Restaurant owners were willing to comply with limited seating, putting plexiglass between the booths, and other measures in order to be able to resume their livelihoods. The so-called County Health Nurse wouldn't hear of it. Businesses remained shuttered without a plan or timetable for when they could reopen.

Meanwhile, this so-called County Health Nurse, who didn't even live in Atchison County, was free to dine and shop in her home county.

In the fall, when the college students returned, this so-called County Health Nurse, again, without any explanation, decided that the college students had to remain in their dorms for a period of time, I believe it was two weeks. They could not even go to the cafeteria to eat. The cafeteria was required to package meals for the students and take to the dorms.

Apparently, the so-called County Health Nurse didn't even consult with Benedictine officials. If she would have, she would have learned that the college had already taken measures to ensure the safety, not only of the returning students, but to the citizens of Atchison. These measures went beyond both the federal and state recommendations, so we are at a loss to explain why this so-called County Health Nurse would imprison perfectly healthy individuals without reason.

These are just two examples of the extremes this so-called County Health Nurse went to. I wish I could say they were the most egregious displays of power, but it gets worse.

After not allowing businesses to open up because it was too risky, this so-called County Health Nurse boarded a crowded airplane and left for Hawaii. We know this because she and her friends pulled their masks off and posed for a selfie while on the plane and posted it to social media.

I can't fathom why a County Health Nurse would leave her post and go to Hawaii for a vacation when, apparently, she thought, there was so much risk of COVID yet that she couldn't allow the businesses in the county she served to open. Don't you think that, if she was that concerned, she would have postponed her trip? And if COVID was, indeed, that big of a threat, would anyone in their right mind get on a plane?

Best regards,

Julie Pennington