

HB 435

COVID-19 has become an emotionally charged issue. Unfortunately, this has become a divisive issue on the national, state, and local level. Some have argued instead of using disease prevention methods this should be an individual choice. While we can all agree some health choices should be left to the individual, like a broken arm and a person deciding to not get an x-ray for and cast I think we could all agree this is a choice. I strongly believe that an adult should be able to make that choice for themselves. COVID is a communicable disease. Infectious diseases depend on an individual to pass it on to another person. One individuals' choice not to take precautions takes away from someone else and is no longer an individual choice. This has been an accepted principle since the founding of our country dating back to George Washington requiring his troops to be inoculated against Smallpox. Some have argued COVID is not a dangerous disease. As I write today, during the second surge of this virus in Williams County, our local hospital's COVID unit is full, and people can no longer be transferred to other hospitals as they cannot accept patients. Last December, we saw over fifty people die in our county with COVID being determined by our local physicians as a contributing factor. Have we as a state reached a point that this is an acceptable outcome? It is my strong belief that we need to take a step back to pause and determine what it is that we are trying to accomplish as Ohioans'? How does this bill prevent people from being hospitalized and worst case dying of this disease? Too many people are being hospitalized and dying. My question to the committee is how does this bill help with preventing these outcomes? When will we be brave enough to not react, but to reflect on our actions before acting? Will this bill provide more doubt regarding vaccines in the community? Will this further promote the divisive nature of COVID? House Bill 435 contains no goals regarding protecting our community from COVID-19 and on behalf of the Williams County Board of Health, we are in strong opposition to this bill.