

December 5, 2021

House Bill 218 – Opposition

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 218. As we find ourselves in yet another time of high rates of COVID infections, hospitalizations and deaths, vaccination represents the best way to get us through this pandemic.

While this bill does allow for businesses to have a vaccine mandate for their employees, it makes it very easy for individuals to claim an exemption. While I understand the need to allow individuals to claim a religious or medical exemption, it cannot be made so easy for anyone to claim an exemption just because they are opposed to a vaccine.

Vaccinations have been very effective at managing vaccine preventable diseases. Vaccines work. We are currently in the midst of a pandemic and we must do what we can to protect our community. It is false to say that the unvaccinated are only hurting themselves if they become ill. Businesses must be able to make the decision of how to best protect their place of work including their employees and their customers. Please allow businesses to decide for themselves the best way to work their way out of this pandemic and oppose House Bill 218.

Sincerely,

Kim Rieman, RN,MPH, CHES

Health Commissioner, Putnam County Health Department