



**SB 22 Opponent Testimony
House State & Local Government Committee**

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair John, and Ranking Member Kelly:

We are writing today on behalf the osteopathic physicians and students of the Ohio Osteopathic Association to express opposition to SB 22. The Ohio Osteopathic Association (OOA) represents approximately 5,000 actively practicing osteopathic physicians (DOs) in the state of Ohio and more than 1,000 osteopathic medical students. DOs represent about 1 in 6 of the total physicians practicing in Ohio and more than a quarter of the state's family physicians. Osteopathic physicians provide distinctive care through a holistic approach to wellness that recognizes the person is a unit of body, mind, and spirit.

SB 22 would prohibit a state of emergency issued by the Governor, including a public health state of emergency, from existing for more than 90 days unless extended by the General Assembly. The bill also permits the General Assembly to rescind certain orders and rules issued by the Governor and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH).

While the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about tremendous fallout in nearly every aspect of our world, we should ensure health decisions are made by health professionals. We should protect the ability of the Ohio Department of Health to uphold its core public health responsibilities. One critical responsibility includes the ability of the ODH to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases. Any attempt to circumvent public health officials from public health decisions would run counter to prioritizing a safe and healthy Ohio.

The philosophical discussion of the system of checks and balances between the Executive and Legislative branches of government is undoubtedly an important one. However, the entire globe is still grappling with the highly contagious variants of COVID-19 while only a small fraction of Ohioans have been vaccinated. Now is not the time to risk the progress made against this deadly pandemic.

The OOA urges your opposition to this measure in its current form at this time. The OOA encourages continued discussion regarding the delicate balance between public health officials and the legislature in times of emergency.

Thank you to the House State & Local Government Committee for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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