



Representative Al Cutrona
59th Ohio House District

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate General Government Budget Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 218.

House Bill 218 is about protecting the medical freedom of Ohio students and workers.

This bill will prohibit a school, institution of higher education, or employer from requiring a student or employee to receive a vaccine if it has not been issued a biologics license or otherwise been granted full approval by the FDA. If a student or employee is required to receive a vaccine which has been issued a biologics license, they would be allowed to give the following reasons for not getting a vaccine: medical contraindications, natural immunity, and reasons of personal conscience, including religious convictions. The individual will be required to submit a written statement to claim one of these exemptions.

House Bill 218 will ensure that students and employees are not saddled with the costs of testing or masking if they are granted an exemption from getting a vaccine, and it will prevent discrimination against a student based solely on their vaccination status while in a school setting or on school property. It also provides for a student or employee to seek relief in the event of a violation, including bringing a mandamus action and, in the case of an employee, an employment discrimination claim.

House Bill 218 will also ban vaccine passports in public and private businesses.

This bill's provisions do not apply to employees of children's hospitals or employees who work in critical care units of hospitals. Most of House Bill 218's provisions will sunset on September 30th, 2025, but the bill's House Bill 606 language from the last General Assembly will sunset in June of 2023.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 218, and I welcome any questions you may have at this time.