

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig and Honorable Members of the General Government Budget Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB218. I am in support of a bill stating that we have the right to exemptions to any vaccine or medication mandate coming from employers or schools. I am a healthcare worker who is directly impacted by this bill. I am a proponent of the bill; however, am in opposition of it as written. I do not agree with the language that excludes ICU or children's hospital employees. If passed as written, legislation will directly affect myself and my family. I have been a dedicated employee of an Ohio children's hospital for 16 years. Though I work in an outpatient setting with a low risk population, this bill as written would not protect me or my coworkers. I strongly believe that Ohioans should have ultimate authority over their medical decisions and a right to maintain privacy regarding those decisions. While the bill would protect students from discrimination and spare some health care workers from termination based on their vaccination status, this bill is not inclusive. While I have not yet been vaccinated, I have had and have recovered from COVID-19 therefore have natural immunity.

I am asking that the wording on this bill be revised to be inclusive to everyone and not exclude anyone including those who work in ICU's or children's hospitals. As written with these exclusions, this is not constitutional. While this bill, as currently written, would honor natural immunity and the presence of antibodies as a means for medical exemption from receiving the COVID-19 vaccination, there is currently no standard to measure whether the natural antibody level is equal to that provided by the vaccines. I believe that we should all have the right to choose what goes into our bodies, especially with the presence of antibodies from natural infection. Current research supports the effectiveness of natural immunity in protection from covid-19.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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