



December 6, 2021

Dear Members of the Senate General Government Committee

On behalf of the Franklin County Board of Health, I am writing to express our opposition to HB 218 as passed by the Ohio House.

We appreciate the leadership of the Ohio House of Representatives for their attempt to create a suitable legislative solution to the ongoing deliberations concerning vaccine requirements by employers and universities in Ohio. Unfortunately, the provisions of HB 218 fall short of what our state needs as we work toward pandemic recovery. Moreover, this bill does not address the concerns expressed by the public health, medical, business and university communities about prior proposals of a similar nature. Protection of an employer's rights to make decisions in the best interest of their employees and those we serve cannot be overstated.

It is imperative that employers, including hospitals and schools, have the right to implement workplace policies they believe are in the best interest of their patients, students, employees, and communities. The COVID-19 vaccine is proven to lower the risk of infection, complications, and death. In fact, where we have higher vaccination rates, we have seen lower rates of infection and deaths per capita. Allowing businesses and all organizations to manage their workplaces must be protected for the betterment of their agency and the community.

Instead of passing HB 218, as you have done in the past, Franklin County Public Health respectfully asks the General Assembly to continue to provide the resources and policies for our state, local communities, hospitals, public health departments, schools, and businesses to enhance not inhibit our response to the pandemic.

Everyday thousands of our citizens across the state test positive for COVID-19. Here in Franklin County, more than 300 are currently hospitalized. And sadly, people are dying every day to what is now a vaccine preventable disease. Let's give ourselves every tool possible to save every life possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Mazzola".

Joe Mazzola, MPA
Health Commissioner
Franklin County Public Health
280 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4562
joemazzola@franklincountyohio.gov
(614)525-4722 office
(614)493-1411 cell