

Joshua Sheak, MD, PhD
791 Ludlow Ave
Cincinnati, OH 45220

December 6, 2021

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Cirino and Ranking Senator Craig,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 218 (HB 218). My name is Joshua Sheak and I am a pediatrics resident physician at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. I am writing to you today to express my **strong opposition to HB 218** as it threatens the safety and health of our children and loved ones. HB 218 seeks to limit vaccine protection provided to my patients, their families, and their communities. HB218 poses a serious threat to the children I serve every day.

Hospital admissions for all ages are again increasing as rates of COVID-19 infections rise. Additionally, we are seeing increased hospital admission for all ages due to illnesses more common during colder months such as influenza. Vaccination against influenza, like COVID-19, helps to limit severe illness and the need for hospitalization. Additionally, vaccinations like both the COVID-19 and influenza vaccines are safe and effective. Consistent with what is seen generally, at our children's hospital, we are admitting many children due to respiratory illnesses in addition to rising numbers of COVID-19 infections. Without vaccinations, the number of patients we will likely admit for severe illness to either COVID-19 or influenza will be higher than with a well-vaccinated community. Additionally, vaccination against COVID-19 can protect children from developing long-term complications of COVID-19 infection.

I am proud that Cincinnati Children's recognized the importance of the COVID-19 vaccine by adding this to the list of required employee vaccines (of which influenza is also required). We believe our advice to families that vaccines are safe, effective, and important. We provide a healthy workforce that safely serves our most vulnerable patients by protecting ourselves and our families with vaccinations. Removing or severely limiting vaccine mandates effectively prevents public and private institutions from requesting protecting their populations and reduces the ability of hospitals to protect our patients and our own families as well. Vaccine mandates and vaccination against are especially important now as the Omicron variant increases and also leads to a future rise in infections. Please let us protect the children and their families in this region by providing a safe, healthy workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joshua Sheak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joshua Sheak, MD, PhD