



# MOUNT CARMEL

## Opponent Testimony

### House Bill 218

#### Ohio Senate General Government Budget Committee

December 7, 2021

Lorraine Lutton

President and CEO

Mount Carmel Health System

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig and the members of the Senate General Government Budget Committee, on behalf of my colleagues at Mount Carmel, I want to thank you and all of our partners at the state level for your support during the COVID-19 pandemic as we continue to prioritize the care and safety of the patients, colleagues, clinicians and communities we serve during this challenging time.

As part of a statewide Vaccine Coalition, we echo our group's statement in opposing HB 218. However, we do appreciate the attempt by the Ohio General Assembly to create a suitable legislative solution to the ongoing deliberations concerning vaccine requirements by employers and universities.

To that end, it has been suggested that HB 218 is a "watered down" version of more harmful anti-vaccine legislative proposals. This bill is not at all "watered down" and will negatively impact public health in our state and hurt Ohio's overall pandemic recovery.

By altering the ability to implement certain vaccine policies, HB 218 erodes efforts to use all of the tools available to fight this pandemic and, as the Vaccine Coalition has noted, also infringes on employers' rights. The proposed broadening of vaccine exemptions under HB 218 takes away the rights of businesses in Ohio to implement important safety measures meant to protect their employees, clients and others from COVID-19.

As I have said previously, we know there is a lot of passion on this topic, not only in the Ohio General Assembly, but in our families, our neighborhoods and throughout our communities. However, the facts are clear. The best way to slow the spread of COVID-19 and end this pandemic is to vaccinate our communities. These vaccines are safe, effective and save lives.

Much like other legislative vehicles regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, HB 218 threatens the health of all Ohioans, the economy and our way of life. I am urging you to not pass this bill out of this committee.

Lorraine Lutton  
President and CEO  
Mount Carmel Health System