



HB 218 Opponent Testimony to the Senate General Government Budget Committee

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chairman Cirino, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Ohio Senate General Government Budget Committee:

I am writing today on behalf of the Ohio Osteopathic Association to express opposition to House Bill 218.

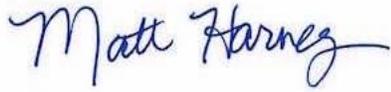
The Ohio Osteopathic Association (OOA) works on behalf of more than 7,000 licensed osteopathic physicians in the state of Ohio and more than 1,000 osteopathic medical students. Osteopathic physicians provide distinctive care through a holistic approach to wellness that recognizes the person is a unit of body, mind, and spirit.

Simply put, vaccines save lives. As written, HB 218 would dramatically weaken our vaccination laws and erode our public health infrastructure.

This public health infrastructure is undergirded by an established, thorough process--informed by medical professionals--to ensure vaccines are as safe as possible before being offered to the public. The U.S. has multiple vaccines that have been strenuously tested, analyzed, and approved. Compared to the alternative, a decision not to immunize can involve dangerous or deadly risk to patients and their communities. To date, COVID-19 taken the lives of nearly 27,000 Ohioans—a number greater than the population of nine counties in Ohio.

Similar to previous efforts, HB 218 fails to address the concerns from the medical, business or higher education communities to fully combat the deadly virus we currently face. The bill also dangerously expands allowable vaccine exceptions while prohibiting vaccine passports. The bill also makes the faulty comparison of equating natural immunity with vaccination. A recent report published by the Centers for Disease Control shows unvaccinated adults who had a previous COVID-19 infection are 5.49 times more likely to be hospitalized than adults who had been fully-vaccinated.¹

Ultimately, the OOA supports science and evidence-based medicine. As written, HB 218 fails to protect employers, essentially reverses Ohio's at-will employment doctrine, and jeopardizes the health and wellbeing of Ohioans. For these reasons, the OOA urges you to reject HB 218 as currently written. We look forward to future discussions and thank the Senate General Government Budget Committee for its consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Harney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matt" and last name "Harney" clearly legible.

Matt Harney, MBA
Executive Director
Ohio Osteopathic Association

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7044e1.htm?s_cid=mm7044e1_w