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**Ohio Senate
General Government Budget Committee
House Bill 218
Melissa Bacon
Groundwork Ohio
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Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Craig and members of the committee, my name is Melissa Bacon, and I am the Policy & Advocacy Director at Groundwork Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony as an opponent of House Bill 218 regarding vaccination related actions.

Groundwork Ohio is a statewide, nonpartisan advocacy organization that champions high-quality early learning and healthy development strategies from the prenatal period to age five, that lay a strong foundation for Ohio kids, families, and communities. Our vision is to make Ohio the best place to be a young child so that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

At Groundwork Ohio we believe that infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are born healthy, grow and develop in healthy environments, and have access to quality health care services have better physical, emotional, and mental health throughout their lives. With access to health care services, families take advantage of resources such as immunizations that protect their child from deadly diseases and keep other children safe by eliminating or greatly decreasing dangerous diseases that spread from child to child.¹

By allowing extensive exemptions for mRNA, DNA, and immunological vaccines, House Bill 218 limits the ability of any entity, including early childhood health and education service providers, to fully protect the health of and mitigate the spread of vaccine-preventable illnesses, including COVID-19, to the young children they serve. The bill infringes on the rights of both private employers and health care facilities to adopt standards that promote safety and health, therefore putting the health of their staff and families at risk.

We should be looking at ways to strengthen Ohio's immunization rates and protect our children and those who care for them. Vaccines, including the COVID vaccine, are safe and effective. In order to lay a strong foundation for Ohio's youngest children, it is imperative that all Ohioans are encouraged to do their part to protect each other from infectious disease. Thank you and we at Groundwork Ohio are available for any questions by members.

¹ [Why Childhood Immunizations Are Important, Stanford Children's Health](#)