



Healthy Lifestyles, Healthy Community

Ohio State Senate General Government Budget Committee
Senator Bob Peterson, Chair

Written Testimony for Committee Hearing on December 7, 2021

Dear Senate General Government Budget Committee Members:

I am writing to oppose HB 218. While this bill allows an entity to require the COVID-19 vaccine, it also requires the entity to honor exceptions that are so broad (medical natural immunity, religious/philosophical) that essentially anyone can opt out with little effort. Employers' right to manage their workplaces free of undue interference from all levels of government must be protected. 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.

We are seeing a surge in cases and our hospitals are at capacity in many areas of the state. The timing of this legislation is short-sighted at this point in time. We are also facing an unknown as we continue to learn more about the Omicron variant. We must continue to increase the number of Ohioans protected by vaccination to reduce the impact of this virus.

Vaccination is our best weapon to ultimately control the spread of this disease; therefore, legitimate exemptions should be as limited as possible. Our public health system has been working, along with our community partners, since February 2020 to gain the upper hand against this virus. We ask for your help by encouraging vaccination, rather than promoting broad and wide opportunities to be exempted from vaccination requirements aimed at promoting the health and safety of our citizens.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose HB 218 and ask that you not move the bill forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Randall M. Flint". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Randall M. Flint, REHS, MPH
Health Commissioner
Alliance City Health Department