



**BEFORE THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET COMMITTEE
THE OHIO SENATE
SENATOR BOB PETERSON, CHAIR**

**HOUSE BILL 218
TESTIMONY OF ROSS MCGREGOR
PRESIDENT AND CEO
PENTAFLEX INC.**

December 7, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate General Government Budget Committee, my name is Ross McGregor, and I am here today in my capacity as the president and CEO of Pentaflex, Inc., a manufacturing company headquartered in Springfield, and on behalf of The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA), of which I am a longtime member, to testify in opposition of House Bill 218.

Since the start of the pandemic, manufacturers have learned a lot about our capabilities. Ohio manufacturers adapted to new demands and supply chain restrictions – all while maintaining productivity and supplying the nation with essential items. As the state's largest economic sector, manufacturers continue to lead the economic recovery.

With more than 150 associates on our payroll, it is critical to ensure that our team members have a safe and healthy workplace. The safety and well-being of my employees and their families is my primary concern. Safety is not just about protecting employees and guests from traditional workplace injuries; it is also about making sure employees are protected to the greatest extent possible from new workplace challenges like COVID-19 or any other illness that can be easily transmitted.

House Bill 218 would create gaping exemptions from any COVID-19 vaccine requirement implemented by a private employer. These exemptions would make such an employer's vaccination requirement meaningless and nearly impossible to manage. Further, businesses trying to navigate this legislation would open themselves to potential discrimination cases brought by an aggrieved or disgruntled employee to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission.

Simply stated, House Bill 218 creates confusion and complexity among competing mandates. Last month, the Biden administration released its vaccinate-or-test emergency temporary standard (ETS), requiring companies with 100 or more employees to be fully vaccinated or face weekly testing. The OMA opposes this federal mandate; however, affected employers are still required to comply with the federal standard, should it be found constitutional. While the ETS is being litigated, House Bill 218 merely adds to the complexity of an already uncertain regulatory climate for employers.

Ohio employers already have their hands full with supply chain disruptions, rising input costs, and exacerbated labor shortages. The state government should not add to these uncertainties and disruptions through heavy-handed micro-management of the private sector.

My company's leadership remains – like all private enterprises – the best and most informed decision-makers when it comes to managing the safety of our facility. House Bill 218 oversteps the line between public and private. Employers are in the best position to decide what measures make the most sense to protect their companies, not the government.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the members of this committee, for the opportunity to provide opposition testimony on House Bill 218. I am happy to answer any questions.