



Sub. H.B. 218  
Opponent Testimony  
Ohio Senate General Government Budget Committee  
December 7, 2021

Chairman Peterson, Vice-Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate General Government Budget Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Ohio Hospital Association and Ohio Children's Hospital Association in opposition to Sub. H.B. 218, which infringes upon an employer's right to implement vaccine policies.

**This bill limits employers, including hospitals, from implementing policies that effectively protect patients, employees and communities from the known and substantial risks of COVID-19. Additionally, this bill does not address the concerns expressed by the medical, business and university communities about prior proposals of a similar nature.**

Caregivers at Ohio's hospitals have been on the front lines of the pandemic since the very beginning and continue to see high levels of patient volumes, including a current surge of COVID-19 hospitalizations across the state that is once again pushing hospitals to capacity. Through these dire conditions, Ohio hospitals continue to do the best they can in responding to the many challenges and consequences of the pandemic, and Sub. H.B. 218 interferes with their ability to ensure the safety and well-being of those who enter their facilities.

Employers, including hospitals, have implemented an array of workplace safety measures to respond to the challenges of the pandemic. Some employers have made the decision to require employees be vaccinated against COVID-19. While Sub. H.B. 218 would technically permit certain vaccine requirements, it also allows for such broad exemptions that any such requirement would be rendered meaningless. The health and safety measures implemented by employers, including vaccine requirements, are done with the important goal of keeping the workplace safe and minimizing the risk of exposure to the virus. It is critical that employers maintain the right to develop the health and safety policies that meet the needs of their individual workplaces.

Ohio's hospitals and health systems are committed to protecting the health and well-being of health care personnel and the patients and communities they serve. The best available scientific evidence indicates that:

- COVID-19 vaccinations are safe.
- COVID-19 vaccinations are effective at reducing both the risk of becoming infected and spreading the infection to others.

Given the severity and spread of COVID-19 across Ohio, it is imperative that employers, including hospitals, have the right to implement workplace policies they believe are in the best interest of their patients, employees, and communities.

OHA, OCHA and our member hospitals look forward to continuing to work together to put this pandemic behind us as soon as possible.