

Dear Senator Roegner:

On behalf of the Fulton County Board of Health, I write to ask that this message be submitted to the Senate Government Reform and Oversight Committee in opposition to Senate Bill 22.

The bill, as introduced, would severely restrict the authority of the Director of Health to respond in a timely and efficient way to outbreaks of communicable disease and public health emergencies that threaten the health and safety of Ohioans.

As the public health system, both state and local, works diligently with all partners to make our way out of this once-in-a-century pandemic, the effort has and will continue to be an "all hands on deck" situation. Now is not the time to strip the state health director of any authority that might be necessary to limit the spread of this virus that has resulted in the death of over 11,000 Ohioans to date. Now is the time to focus on Ohio's mass vaccination efforts, described by most experts as the most significant logistical challenge ever known.

This bill will also impact the Director's authority in times beyond the declaration of a public health emergency, such as communicable disease outbreaks that impact multiple local jurisdictions.

Please do not pass a bill that will tie up the Director's authority in a cumbersome legislative process that includes an oversight committee and concurrent resolutions by both chambers. Ohio has a Ohio Public Health Advisory Board whose membership could be modified to include legislative appointees. This body currently contains members with significant public health and medical expertise and experience. The Ohio Public Health Advisory Board would be better suited to achieve a swift and systematic evaluation of public health orders during an emergency rather than create a legislative oversight committee.

Sincerely

Kimberly A Cupp,
Health Commissioner
Fulton County Health Department

Kimberly A. Cupp, RS, MPH
Health Commissioner