



Hamilton County

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Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
Opponent Testimony – SB 22

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, thank you for the opportunity for the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners to submit written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 22.

We are living in an unprecedented time as the COVID19 pandemic continues to affect our community's health and vitality. We have been on the front lines of the pandemic response by providing the best access to accurate health information, testing and vaccine that we can. We have also worked to keep residents in their homes through rent assistance, small businesses open and provided critical PPE to first responders, teachers, nursing home employees and so on. The leadership at the state level has been helpful in taking the lead with science driven decisions related to reducing the spread of the disease. We have relied on this expertise to guide our decisions to keep our citizens safe.

Decisions need to be made quickly in an ever changing environment. Emergency response needs to be nimble and flexible - The Governor and Department of Health orders are needed to respond to rapidly changing conditions/circumstances during the state of emergency/pandemic. The ability of those of us at the local level to do our work relies on real time guidance from the state. We fear that SB 22 will create delays in decision making and hamper our ability to rapidly respond to the needs on the ground.

A coordinated response from the state level has also streamlined what could potentially be a very confusing and disparate community by community response. By removing the state-wide authority, local jurisdictions would be left to issue their own orders leading to hundreds of different responses across the state to the pandemic and future emergencies. This would result in inconsistent rules and orders for residents and businesses across Ohio.

We believe that the best decisions related to health issues, such as this pandemic, should be guided by facts and decided upon by the health experts. In contrast, this bill specifically authorizes the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee to oversee actions taken by ODH to prevent the spread of contagious or infectious diseases. Under these circumstances, non-public health individuals would have a greater say over public health experts and scientists.

Thank you for allowing us to offer our perspective and opposition to SB 22.

s/Stephanie Summerow Dumas, President
s/Denise Driehaus
Hamilton County Commissioners