

February 9, 2021

The Honorable Kristina D. Roegner
Senator, The Ohio Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Senator Roegner:

On behalf of Franklin County Public Health, and as President of the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners, I write to ask that this letter be submitted to the Senate Government Reform and Oversight Committee in opposition to Senate Bill 22.

Senate Bill 22, as introduced, would severely restrict the authority of the Director of Health to respond in a timely and efficient way to public health emergencies that collectively threaten the health and safety of all Ohioans. This bill will also impact the Director's authority in times beyond the declaration of a public health emergency. For instance, communicable disease outbreaks, such as those in long-term care facilities, meat packaging plants, and food service operations that impact multiple local jurisdictions.

As the state and local public health agencies work diligently with partners to respond to this one-in-a-century pandemic, the effort has been and will continue to be an "all hands-on-deck" situation. Respectfully, let's focus on giving our public health leaders more tools to assist with its overall response, including Ohio's mass vaccination program, maintaining our testing capabilities, continuing to support our businesses and schools to open responsibly, and encouraging our residents to remain committed to our mitigation strategies.

Our health department and state association understand the need for proper oversight and are committed to those longer-term conversations with Governor DeWine and the Ohio Legislature. We ask for the opportunity to collaborate with your committee on reform measures to improve our public health system, including necessary changes to ensure appropriate oversight and engagement from our state and local elected officials.

Sincerely,



Joe Mazzola, MPA
Health Commissioner

Cc: Senators Andrew O. Brenner; Hearcel F. Craig; Stephanie Kunze; Tina Maharath
Mysheika Roberts, MD, MPH, Columbus Public Health