



To: Speaker of the Ohio House Jason Stephens and Chairman Scott Oelslager  
 Da: June 25, 2024  
 Re: HB 319

On behalf of the above organizations representing thousands of Ohioans, we write today in opposition to House Bill 319. Our members are extremely troubled by this legislation as it would discourage vaccination

against numerous communicable diseases, and therefore pose serious risks to the health and lives of Ohioans across the state.

HB 319 would prohibit an employer—even a hospital or physician office—from requiring employees to receive ANY vaccination, or impose safety measures for those who are unvaccinated such as requiring a mask. Under current law, Ohioans can seek reasonable accommodations or exemptions from vaccination requirements for religious or medical contraindications. Most institutions and employers already offer flexibility in regard to vaccinations, thus making us question the need for HB 319 in the first place.

Employers are required to provide a safe workplace for their staff based on guidelines from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). This legislation would take away the rights of Ohio business owners and operators to set requirements that prevent employees from posing direct safety threats to each other and other individuals in the workplace. Businesses have a responsibility to assess risk of disease exposure and develop a plan to protect their clientele and staff from health and safety hazards. HB 319 would eliminate the ability of the employer to consider the unique circumstances of their business operations and implement health and safety precautions they deem most appropriate to carry out their services and protect the well-being of all involved.

America has spent decades building up immunity against diseases through widespread vaccination, and by doing so, we have been saving lives for many years. Vaccines preserve our freedoms by allowing us to live our daily lives without having to worry about contracting serious and heartbreaking diseases that once ran rampant through America before vaccines targeting them were developed, such as measles, mumps, hepatitis, meningitis, tuberculosis and many other diseases. Our achievements in public health and advancements in vaccine technology mean that many of these diseases are now much rarer, so the public likely hears much less about the devastation and suffering they cause.

All Ohioans benefit from the crucial protections afforded to us by vaccines every single day, and HB 319 represents a real threat to this protection. The risk cannot be understated, and we emphasize that to risk one of our greatest assets in infectious disease prevention would not only make future outbreaks and epidemics more likely, but basically inevitable. We believe that we must work together to keep people safe and healthy, and HB 319 runs counter to that mission.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. Please contact us should you have any questions.