



March 23, 2021

Governor Mike DeWine
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Senate Bill 22 – Establish legislative oversight over Governor’s and health orders

The Ohio Nurses Association supports the Governor’s veto of Senate Bill 22 – a bill that would interfere with the process by which the Governor and the Ohio Department of Health issue statewide orders during a pandemic. ONA is not only concerned about the health and welfare of all Ohioans during this pandemic, but also seriously questions the constitutionality of SB 22.

On behalf of the 210,000 nurses in the state, the Ohio Nurses Association applauds the proactive steps Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) have taken to fight the war against COVID-19 in the state of Ohio. The pandemic has placed additional pressure on the current healthcare system over the last year, including nurse staffing issues and lack of equipment. ONA is confident that Ohio would not have had enough nurses and other healthcare professionals available to care for Ohioans if the administration and the executive branch, including ODH, had not intervened early. Taking away these tools from the state would have dangerous consequences. Nurses across Ohio appreciate the orders issued to curb the spread of COVID-19 and to decrease the potential burden on Ohio’s healthcare system. We have continued to make progress as a state, with the vaccine rollout, but know we have a long way to go. We agree with our fellow healthcare colleagues that, “Vigilance and careful steps are key in the path to Ohio’s pandemic recovery, and the medical community is seriously concerned about the implications SB 22 would have upon the health and safety of Ohioans”.

ONa believes SB 22 would trade data-driven expert opinions and proven authority for a curtailed and inconsistent approach to public health. The practical effect of the legislative oversight proposed in the bill, especially allowing for orders to be rescinded in a short timeframe, would be piecemeal approach to protecting public health, risking the lives of 11.7 million Ohioans.

The Ohio Nurses Association strongly supports the work of ODH. It is abundantly clear to Ohio’s nurses that the swift and nation-leading actions taken have saved lives, including lives of healthcare workers. The measures to not overwhelm the healthcare system means healthcare workers were not faced with the horrible decision of triaging who lives and who dies.



ONA realizes the economic impact COVID-19 has had on businesses across the state, including Ohio hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers. However, it is ONA's position that an economy can only recover if it has a strong, healthy workforce in place.

ONA believes that during these unprecedented times where healthcare workers are risking their health and making sacrifices every single day for fellow Ohioans, the state needs to continue to protect the frontline workers by listening to healthcare experts specifically tasked with protecting the state over relying on a legislative body to field testimony to make healthcare decisions.

The Governor and healthcare leaders at ODH are responsible for the health of 11.7 million Ohioans and Ohio nurses applaud their non-partisan approach to caring for each of those lives. Our administration's work to mitigate the spread COVID-19 has been nothing short of incredible. Ohio nurses continue to stand next to Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health in this war, and thus fully support the Governor's veto of SB 22. We appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue.