



## American Lung Association Testimony House Bill 22 Oppose

Chairman Head and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 22 –Medical Mandates; Each Adult Has A Fundamental Right to be Free From Mandates by Delegate Walker. The American Lung Association strongly opposes this bill.

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases.

When we found ourselves in the midst of a respiratory pandemic in 2020, the American Lung Association believed we had an important role. The Lung Association launched a \$25 million campaign to end COVID-19 and defend against future respiratory virus pandemics, funding research awards and grants for preventative research as well as working to evaluate the effects of COVID-19 on patients with chronic lung disease. We have worked in coalition with government, private industry, and public health organizations to address the pandemic on every level.

As the nation addresses the COVID-19 pandemic it is critical for the public to continue to practice public health measures including wearing snug-fitting masks and receiving the COVID-19 vaccination and boosters.

Throughout our nation's history, vaccinations have been an important tool to save countless lives and eradicate deadly diseases from smallpox to the flu and now they are an important tool to help our nation address the pandemic we face today. The sooner we vaccinate every Virginian and individual in the United States, the better chance we stand of ending the pandemic and moving the Commonwealth and the nation forward. House Bill 22 will derail these efforts and threaten the health of Virginians living with lung disease.

Our public policies should focus on ensuring everyone is vaccinated. Over [207 million](#) people in the United States are fully vaccinated and billions of people worldwide have received a COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccines have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. The [evidence](#) is clear that vaccination reduces the risk of hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19, as well as the risk of contracting and spreading the virus. As a trusted champion for lung health, the American Lung Association is focused on slowing the spread and defeating COVID-19. To further protect the overall population and those most vulnerable, we need a

sufficiently high proportion of the population to get vaccinated and take other public health precautions like wearing a snug fitting mask to stop the transmission.

HB 22 would not only impact COVID-19 vaccinations but also other critical vaccinations against influenza, pertussis, measles and other serious illnesses. Policies that slow the uptake of vaccinations increase the risk for outbreaks of other vaccine-preventable diseases, which would put even greater burden on our healthcare system and compromise the health of all Virginians.

The American Lung Association thanks the Virginia General Assembly for their continued commitment to the health and wellbeing of the residents of the Commonwealth. The American Lung Association strongly opposes House Bill 22 as an attempt to undermine this commitment that puts Virginians at risk of severe disease and potential death from COVID-19. We encourage the General Assembly to focus on efforts to support people getting vaccinated and boosted and support public health measures like mask wearing and reject policies that slow the uptake of vaccinations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aleks Casper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aleks Casper  
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