Dear Governor Ducey,

I am appealing to your hard-earned wisdom through experience to veto HB 2498. As you well know, one of the critical executive powers is the ability to respond to emergencies with thoughtful interventions. During the COVID crisis, you exercised that authority in measured, least-restrictive ways.

One of the tools at your disposal was the use of vaccines. While the current crisis did not require any statewide vaccine requirement, imagine a future variant with the infectiousness of the Omicron surge of December-January, which may have infected 30 or 40% of all Arizonans, combined with the virulence of another Coronavirus like MERS, which has a 30% fatality rate.

If such a surge were to occur, and HB 2498 was the law, your hands would be tied. You could not keep businesses open and citizens employed by using any sort of vaccine requirement. Cities and towns could not protect their citizens by requiring even their own employees to be vaccinated before interacting face-to-face with the people they serve. Even public health departments could not require vaccination of their own employees in outreach or clinical settings or even vaccination sites – serving vulnerable patients.

This is an overly broad prohibition of a potential tool in an unforeseen crisis. Please respect the authority that all citizens invest in our elected executive branch officials. As you know, good people run for office in order to do the right thing, in their best judgement, to protect and serve the people who entrusted them with that authority. Please don’t tie their hands in a future, unforeseen emergency.

Please veto HB 2498.

Sincerely,