

Diane Crawford

Ohio Parents Advocating for Vaccines

HB 559 Proponent Testimony

Health Committee, Ohio House of Representatives

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, members of the House Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak in support of House Bill 559. My name is Diane Crawford and my testimony is offered today in my capacity as a member of Ohio Parents Advocating for Vaccines. I am also the founder of The Crawford Crew Foundation. The mission of the foundation is to raise money to support patient assistance, education, research, and community outreach programs related to cervical and other gynecological cancers. I am a cervical cancer survivor and am passionate about helping others and ensuring a healthy community for Ohio families; these are the reasons I am here before you today.

While I can speak personally to how a cancer diagnosis can be attributed to a weakened immune system I can also relate to how cancer and fighting it with various treatments can also weaken the body's immune system by affecting the blood cells that protect us. Having a compromised immune system can affect nearly every facet of life and knowing that the people you come in contact with are immunized against communicable viruses can provide relief and allow you and your loved ones to go about their day without constantly worrying what they might be exposed to. This is especially true for immunocompromised children whose lives depend on the health of other students in school.

House Bill 559 will go a long way to protect Ohio's children and parents with impaired immune systems while having no impact on the minority of people who cannot or choose not to be vaccinated. In fact, this bill will protect them, too. The legislation proposes modest changes to current law in order to ensure children able and willing to receive vaccinations are not falling through the cracks. If the bill is passed it will give health departments and schools the ability to quickly and accurately access data to see how frequently this is happening.

As a mother of three children and as a cancer survivor, I believe this legislation will not only protect immunocompromised children, but also immunocompromised parents who may worry about what their children are being exposed to in school. You have the unique opportunity to

vote for legislation that will bring peace of mind to these people. People like me. People who should be focused on getting through treatments, getting healthy, and restoring some normalcy to their lives after receiving a cancer diagnosis. It is my wish that no one should have to worry about contending with a virus like polio or the measles, especially since we've known how to beat them for decades. You have the chance to make a significant difference in many lives at no expense to anyone else.

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, members of the committee, thank you again for allowing me to speak in support of House Bill 559. There is no doubt in my mind what a tremendous difference this bill will have for Ohio's children and parents. At this time, I would be happy to answer any questions you have.