



Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom

Advocating for Medical Freedom since 2015

House Bill 559 – Opponent Testimony
Ohio House Health Committee
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June 25, 2018

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and honorable members of the Health Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide this additional opponent testimony submission. Many opponents, myself included, felt that our testimonies were unfairly time-restricted, mischaracterized as making the same points, and went largely unnoticed, with just two or three committee members present during some of them. We feel that a bill with such public burdens and impact as HB 559 should be given as many hearings as possible to consider all the ramifications and potential issues. We do not feel that opponent concerns have been adequately addressed and respectfully request more time on this bill in committee.

Specifically, we are concerned that any amendments and substitute bills will not remedy the major parts of the bill that we and many Ohio citizens find most unfair:

- **Tracking of Vaccination and Exemption Status and Public Posting of the Data**

Vaccination status is one possible marker for disease prevention. It is imperfect, and without knowing the antibody status of any student, one cannot really understand their protection level, let alone how that impacts others. Many school personnel are likely under-vaccinated for some of the same diseases covered by the childhood vaccination schedule. Vaccines only exist for a relatively small number of the infections which can impact children, and immunocompromised children are at risk for all of the infections, especially when symptomatic kids and adults don't stay home. Additionally, we have concerns that this information will be used by media and others to create public outrage and make misleading statements about health and risk at various schools and districts.

- **Insertion of a Third Party into the Exemption Process Against the Parent's Choosing**

FERPA protects private student health data, and parents would be required to share some of that – namely their child's vaccination status – with an outside provider whom they otherwise may not have chosen. Not only does this run counter to the Ohio Constitution by compelling a person to participate in a health care system, but this same requirement is currently being investigated as a FERPA violation in Michigan. The burden of payment for the services of the medical professional hasn't been addressed well, and there is a lot of concern that this will place an unfair burden on poor and/or rural families who may have difficulty getting to a provider. Besides this burden, many parents who decline one or more vaccines reported physician bullying and dismissal from practice, inaccurate and incomplete information about vaccine risks and benefits, and disregard for vaccine adverse events. These and other parents should not be forced to receive education and information when they are declining for religious/conscience reasons, which have nothing to do with medical information. We find it particularly troubling that this bill is being heavily lobbied for by the very medical trade organization whose members could benefit financially from it.

- **Unknown Immunization Form Contents and No Set Format for Risk and Benefit Information**

While some content is specified for the immunization forms, it is not restricted in terms of what can be added. Parents have been given very concerning forms to sign by schools and medical providers, which state they are knowingly placing their child and others in danger by not vaccinating. Some providers have even used refusal to vaccinate as grounds for dismissal or to report to CPS. Likewise, the risk and benefit information is not specified or restricted. Parents have reported doctors insisting their child will die without vaccines, telling parents other vaccines than are on the school schedule were required, and withholding information about ingredients, including the fact that several vaccines are manufactured using aborted fetal tissue. We encourage and are happy to assist with further discussion about both standardized form contents and responsibility and determination of standardized risk and benefit information.

I've attached a one-page handout summarizing our concerns about this bill and any possible related amendments and substitute bills. I hope that all committee members will take the time to read it and call me with any questions. Thank you again for this opportunity to address House Bill 559.