



PRESERVING THE FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT TO HEALTH FREEDOM

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June 17, 2019

**Written (Opponent) Testimony for HB 165 presented to the Primary and Secondary Education Committee of the Ohio House of Representatives - Ravi Kulasekere PhD, ND, BCHHP**

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Jones, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **opposing** HB 165.

My name is Dr Ravi Kulasekere, a practicing board certified holistic health practitioner and a medical physicist by training. I am also the treasurer and a board member of Health Freedom Ohio, an organization dedicated to preserving the fundamental rights to health freedom in the state of Ohio. I am writing to express my opposition to HB 165 for a number of reasons, a few of which are outlined below.

Ohio currently has an age-appropriate health education curriculum for students from grades K-12 (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio>) which has been updated as necessary and in a timely manner to incorporate growing needs. What this bill is proposing to do is to remove the checks and balances we have in Ohio through the legislative process by eliminating the approval of both houses and at least one public hearing now needed to change health education curriculum and place the responsibility of developing health education standards in the hands of the state board of education where there will be no legislative or parental input to what is being taught to our kids in school. This is totally unacceptable considering the influence of special interest groups and others seen in recent times, whose ideas of what health education is, might not encompass the views of the majority. A good example of this is the recent AMA resolution to push for legislation that would allow minors to consent to medical procedures that they deem safe and necessary even if parents and their own healthcare professionals think otherwise. This is not only irresponsible but outright dangerous.

The bill's proponents also have claimed that the state board of education is able to provide accurate and valuable health education standards which may not align with 'un-informed' adults at home and that the students should trust adults who the state board deems informed. This is a ridiculous assumption, given the fact that every parent strives hard to get the best possible information from the most trusted resources for their children. The proponents of this bill also incorrectly assume that parents don't have the right information since they have not gone through the present health education standards in school, another egregious and false assumption that is far from the truth. This is the information age where processes by which one can achieve better health is available at the fingertips of anyone who is taking the time to look and the modalities and opportunities to improve health are diverse and varied. I have many clients in my practice who are well-versed in aspects of achieving and maintaining better health through methods that are certainly not those adopted by the pharmaceutically driven healthcare models that will be taught in schools. If adopted this bill will allow schools to teach children that the beliefs and practices of their parents are wrong and that the pharmaceutical model of health (or more appropriately sick-) care model is what is right. This will be a clear infringement of



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parental rights and unnecessary over-reach on the part of the state and will cause confusion and discord within the family unit.

Finally, we need to look at what is going on with the deplorable state of the health of our children in this nation and look at other states where these standards have been adopted and see if the additional tax payer burden is warranted and if the standards are doing anything to advance better health. In many of the testimonies including that of the bill sponsor we heard that Ohio ranks last because of the lack of health standards. This is an outright fallacy. According to 2018 data Ohio ranks 23 in a nation of 50 states, a far cry from being last.

<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/9985-health-rank?loc=1&loct=2#detailed/2/2-9,11-52/false/37/any/19345>

What this means is that these standards are not contributing much to better health outcomes in states where they have been implemented. This should come as no surprise when you look at what schools feed kids and promote as healthy, based on industry input and not on any real health measures. What Ohio needs are not more bureaucrats telling kids what to do that is not going to help, and in some cases even cause more harm. What we need is to find ways to work with parents and teachers to teach known healthy habits and better food and disease prevention choices that work with the values that align with families and have proven benefits as used around the world successfully. With this in mind I urge you to consider NOT supporting HB165 which is too vague and will not achieve anything we cannot achieve with the health education curriculum today. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Kulasekera", with a horizontal line underneath the name.

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