

Dear Chairman Lipps and members of the House Health Committee,

I am a pediatrician in Cincinnati, Ohio who is writing to you today to urge you to act AGAINST Ohio House Bill 248. This bill poses a threat to the health and well-being of the children of Ohio. Scientific data shows that vaccines save lives. Vaccines are crucial to the health of our entire community, but especially to children. Because of the polio vaccine, children can now play freely outside in the summer without fear of an illness that could paralyze them and prevent them from breathing on their own. Because of the pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine, we can live without fear of infants getting so sick they stop breathing and need a ventilator to breathe for them. Not only do vaccines directly improve the health of children, but their requirement serves a second purpose – it brings children into their pediatrician's office to get the preventive care they need every few months to every year. These preventive visits help manage diseases like asthma, which if not well-controlled with regular follow-up, can lead to missed days of school or worse, days in the hospital.

While I have heard this bill being hailed as a bill that protects freedom of choice, what it actually does is put the health of Ohio's children and the health of Ohio's general public at risk. As someone who is dedicated to the health and well-being of all children, it is painful to think that Ohio may be stepping backwards in time – back to a time where we let children die of vaccine-preventable illnesses. Please make the right decision and prevent this dangerous piece of legislation, HB 248, from moving forward.

Sincerely,  
Amanda Harton, MD