

Hello. I want to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to speak today. My name is Jennifer Adams. I have been an Ohio resident my entire life. I've spent the last 17 years serving the people of Ohio while working as a Registered Nurse. The last 8 years I have practiced as a nurse practitioner. While the majority of my career has been spent in the emergency room, I have worked the last two years in occupational health. This gives me a unique perspective to discuss the potential impacts of HB 248.

While HB 248 has been framed as a bill that will encode individual rights when it comes to vaccinations, it is a very flawed piece of legislation. I understand this bill was drafted as a response to the introduction of Covid-19 vaccines. This seems fair. As these vaccines are still under Emergency Use Authorization, it is understandable that individuals would not want to be forced to take them. I personally feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to receive my Covid vaccine 6 months ago. At the time I was picking up hours in my local Covid ICU. I saw things I have never seen in 17 years of working in healthcare. I have held peoples hands in their final moments of life as they died of Covid-19. This helped to shape my personal decision, but I understand the hesitancy that may surround this vaccine for others.

This bill's reach goes far beyond a vaccine that is under Emergency Use Authorization. It prohibits mandatory vaccinations and vaccination disclosures for all vaccinations, including standard immunizations. The state of Ohio already allows for religious and personal exemptions for vaccinations, so this part is nothing new. Ohio residents already have the freedom to choose whether or not they get any vaccine. But what this bill does, is take away the ability for institutions to assure the safety of their most vulnerable patients or residents.

As a nurse practitioner who works in occupational health, my main goal is to assure the safety of the patients and staff at my facility. I take this job very seriously. When one of my employees goes in to take care of a premature baby in a NICU, I know they have been immunized for pertussis. Pertussis, or whooping cough, kills 1 in 7 infected preemies.

I know that when one of my employees goes in a room to care with someone undergoing chemotherapy or has a significantly compromised immune system, they have been vaccinated for influenza. Influenza kills 1 in 10 infected individuals on chemo.

I have staff that cannot be immunized against disease because they have underlying medical conditions that do not allow this. I know that when they come in to work to give care to our patients, they are not at risk of being exposed to disease from unvaccinated colleagues.

This bill as it is currently written strips our ability to assure the safety of our patients and staff. While I understand that an individual's rights are important, what about the rights of my NICU babies? What about the rights of my immunocompromised patients? Who

cares about their rights? When someone comes to us at their most vulnerable moment, they should have the confidence in knowing that the staff caring for them are safe and will not make their already delicate situations worse. If you take away our ability to protect them, you will see the effects down the road. I'm certain you do not want to be responsible party for an infectious disease outbreak in a hospital. Lives will be lost and it will have been completely preventable. I urge you to vote against this bill as it is dangerous for the people of Ohio.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. Thank you

*J Adams FNP-BC*

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