

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to House Bill 248.

My name is Dr. Margaret Jones, and I am a pediatrician practicing primary care at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. I am board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics. I am extremely concerned about the negative impact House Bill 248 would have on the health and well-being of our children and our entire community. In my work at Cincinnati Children's, I have cared for children who have developed serious medical problems and even died from vaccine-preventable diseases like the flu, meningitis, pneumonia, and whooping cough. Fortunately, because of adequate vaccination rates in our community, these events are rare. I am deeply afraid of the dangerous decreases in immunization rates across our community that would result if House Bill 248 were to be passed. I am scared that these horrifying and life-altering events that I've witnessed would no longer be rare but would instead become common.

As we move closer to overcoming the horrors of the COVID-19 pandemic—a disease which we will ultimately defeat because of effective, science-backed public health interventions including masking and vaccines—we must continue to make responsible decisions to protect the livelihood of our entire community. Please protect our children and all of our neighbors. Do not support House Bill 248.

Thank you for hearing my testimony in opposition to House Bill 248.

Margaret Jones, MD