



June 11, 2021

The Honorable Scott Lipps
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Lipps,

I am an infectious disease physician currently working as a medical director at OhioHealth's Riverside Methodist Hospital. OhioHealth is a 12-hospital healthcare system that has served the central Ohio community since 1891. We are a family of 35,000 associates, physicians and volunteers with over 50 ambulatory sites, hospice, home-health, medical equipment and other health services spanning a 47-county area throughout Ohio.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on and express my concern regarding House Bill 248.

At its core, this legislation puts Ohioans, including children, at risk. While I understand testimony has been provided to the Health Committee suggesting that the bill's purpose is to prevent the COVID-19 vaccine from becoming mandatory, as I understand it, HB 248 applies to all immunizations. If passed, this legislation has the potential to reverse decades of immunity from life-threatening, but vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, mumps, hepatitis, meningitis and tuberculosis.

In the interest of public health and preserving sound public health policy, I respectfully request that the Health Committee not favorably report this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Joseph Gastaldo, M.D.