



June 14, 2021

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you sincerely for the opportunity to provide testimony on *House Bill 248* (HB-248).

My name is Patricia Manning-Courtney, MD. I am a Developmental Pediatrician, and current Chief of Staff at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. I stand in strong opposition to HB-248, a bill that would destroy the public health framework that keeps us all safe from deadly outbreaks of communicable disease.

As a Developmental Pediatrician specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, I witnessed firsthand the damage that was caused by the belief that vaccines cause Autism Spectrum Disorder. Vaccination rates dropped, leading to measles outbreaks, including in OH. Perhaps less dangerous, but heartbreaking nonetheless was seeing families struggle with the decision to vaccinate their children and feeling as if they had to choose between the real risk of deadly diseases and the unfounded risk of possible Autism Spectrum Disorder. I can't imagine the impact that HB-248 would have on confidence in vaccines, and ultimately vaccination rates.

As Chief of Staff at one of the top children's hospitals in the country, during a global pandemic, I witnessed firsthand the impact that Covid-19 has had on children and families, directly and indirectly. Losses of all types, that can't really be fully tallied. Limiting a health care organization's ability to practice the simple infection control measures that keep us all safe, such as masking, feels as dangerous as restricting the ability to wash our hands. Restraining the ability to require or know vaccination status in hospitals and schools would cripple our ability to manage disease outbreaks. Simply put, HB-248 would directly harm the children of OH.

Ohio already has some of the most lenient approaches to requiring vaccination, and vaccination rates are already amongst the lowest in the country. HB-248 would further degrade the safety we are all afforded by the privilege of being vaccinated.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,


Patricia Manning-Courtney, M.D.