

**Written Testimony HB 248**

**Submitted by: Tessa Xuan**

**Testifying as Opponent**

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the Health Committee,

My name is Tessa Xuan and I live in Cleveland, Ohio. I graduated from the Ohio State University with a degree in Biochemistry, and during my time at OSU, I worked in a lab that was developing an alternative Tuberculosis vaccine. TB is an infectious disease that spreads through the air. In 2018 alone, there were more than 10 million cases of active TB, resulting in 1.5 million deaths and making it the number one cause of death from an infectious disease at that time.

Vaccines are safe, effective and the best tool we have to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Our public officials must make these important public health decisions based on facts and evidence, not fear and lies, in order to protect the safety and health of our fellow Ohioans. There are already existing protections in place in Ohio's laws that allow for individuals to decline vaccinations for medical, religious, and reasons of conscience.

We must honor the lives of over 20,000 Ohioans who have already died from COVID-19 and countless others who were impacted by this loss of precious life, by doing whatever we can to keep our communities safe. HB 248 makes all of us less safe. This bill threatens the health, safety and security of all Ohioans and could lead to dangerous and deadly outbreaks of preventable diseases.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I ask that you please do everything in your power to stop the spread of misinformation, and to prevent this dangerous legislation from passing.