

June 17, 2021

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the **Ohio** House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of House Bill **248**. There is near unanimous opinion among doctors, nurses and public health professionals that HB 248 would be a danger to health of Ohioans and even the nations since infectious diseases respect no borders as we have learned from the Covid-19 pandemic.

I was born in 1950 and remember as a child when polio vaccines were released. These vaccines saved many children from the ravages of polio. The pictures of kids in “iron lungs” and seeing kids wearing leg braces haunted my childhood dreams and motivated all us to take our shots without complaint. As a medical student I saw children with measles encephalitis and bacterial meningitis and the terrible brain damage that these diseases caused. As an adult primary care Internist, spent lots of time every fall convincing my patients to take the flu shot and the pneumonia vaccines because every winter I saw some of my patients die from these illnesses and always wondered how I could have failed to convince them to get immunized. Impossible to know who gave them the flu or pneumonia that took their lives but someone did.

I am certainly and advocate for liberty and personal freedom but with infectious diseases each of us can unknowingly expose, sicken and kill our fellow citizens. It is certainly annoying to have to stop at a stop sign or at a red light even when we see no one coming. We pull over when we see flashing ambulance lights or we pull over for police sirens even when we know we were not speeding. These are laws that impose on our liberty and personal freedom in order to protect all of us from harming each other. Following these traffic laws is not optional nor should following them be optional based on religious or philosophical disagreements with traffic laws.

I recognize that asking my fellow citizens to the very small but real risk of getting immunized against serious and deadly diseases is a sacrifice we all share because overall the danger of allowing these serious diseases to spread does far more deadly harm to everyone’s liberty and personal freedom than the immunizations do.

In fact, every medical intervention comes with some risk of harm. Every drug can cause serious allergic responses. Every emergency operation on an unconscious person can have complications and yet we proceed when life and limb is threatened as if we have consent rather than let the patient die even for a person who has just attempted suicide.

As caregivers, we should weigh the harms and benefits of our treatments with every decision we make. Most of the time, if an adult chooses to refuse our best advice, we consider that part of their free choice to suffer the consequences. However, we do not allow parents to refuse life-saving treatment for their children. If an adult is willing to live

as a hermit, away from all other human contact then they will neither catch nor spread infectious diseases but if we are to live together safely there need to be laws that protect us from other people's bad decisions whether that is running a red light or failing themselves or refusing to have their children take low risk effective vaccines that can prevent others from illness and death. The choice is quarantine, lockdowns, economic loss, morbidity and mortality from preventable infectious diseases or the very small but real risks of vaccination. I suspect that the following list of expert medical organizations in opposition to this bill will continue to grow.

Sincerely,

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The list below is the organizations that oppose this legislation

[Akron Children's Hospital](#)

[American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network - ACS CAN](#)

[American College of Emergency Physicians - ACEP](#)

[American College of Physicians \(ACP\)](#)

[American College of Surgeons](#)

[Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield](#)

[Arthritis Foundation](#)

[Association of Ohio Health Commissioners](#)

[Buckeye Association of School Administrators](#)

[Biotechnology Innovation Organization - BIO](#)

[Buckeye Health Plan](#)

[Charitable Healthcare Network](#)

[Children's Defense Fund](#)

[Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center](#)

[Columbus Medical Association](#)

[Dayton Children's Hospital](#)

[Groundwork Ohio](#)

[Immunize Ohio](#)

[Medical Group Management Association \(MGMA\)](#)

[Molina Healthcare](#)

[Nationwide Children's Hospital](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics OH Chap](#)

[Ohio Academy of Family Physicians \(OAFP\)](#)

[Boys & Girls Clubs of Ohio](#)

[Ohio Association of Advanced Practice Nurses](#)

[Ohio Association of Child Care Providers](#)

Ohio Association of Health Plans  
Ohio Association of Rheumatology - OAR  
Ohio Association of School Nurses  
Ohio Business Roundtable  
OCALI  
Ohio Chamber of Commerce  
American College of Cardiology  
Ohio Children's Hospital Association  
Ohio Coroners Association  
Ohio Dermatological Association  
Ohio Health Care Association  
OhioHealth  
Ohio Hematology Oncology Society  
Ohio Hospital Association  
The Ohio Manufacturers' Association  
Ohio Nurses Association  
Ohio Osteopathic Association  
Ohio Pharmacists Association  
Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association  
Ohio Society of Pathologists  
Ohio State Coroners Association  
Ohio State Medical Association  
ProMedica  
SummaCare  
The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio  
American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists  
UC Health  
University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital