

**Priscilla McMaster Luh**  
65 Meadow Park Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio 43209  
(513) 476-2943

February 6, 2022

**Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes,  
Ranking Members of the Ohio House Health Committee**

Dear Chairman Lipps, et al:

I am writing to state my **Support of H.B. 251, the Ohio Indoor Safe Air Act**. Born and bred Ohioan, I have lived in Cleveland, Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio, personally experiencing health issues in both Cincinnati and Columbus. I have experienced it in homes, schools, churches, Medical facilities, restaurants and other public buildings. I am in support of this bill so that people can be armed with awareness, accurate knowledge and disclosure, some measure of legal recourse, as well as home and health resources as needed. It is time to bring this hazard to light and this bill is an essential first step!

My story is both an individual and collective story because I have personally suffered from Toxic Mold Illness since 1992 while living in Windsor, England working for a leading American Corporation. My family has experienced mold illness on some level since 2005, with emphasis on 2010.

There are events in ones life that become permanent markers of time, referred to thereafter as “before” or “after” upon which every experience is measured and there is an implicit understanding just what “before” or “after” means. For my family, that began in 2005 when my husband, three girls, two cats and I moved into a new house. Our girls were 8, 6, and 9 months at the time. After living there for about a year, we’d discovered black mold in the kids playroom in the basement, where we’d laid out mattresses for cooler summer sleeping. We threw out the mattresses, removed all the carpet and thought that was the whole measure of the problem. It was about this time that our middle daughter, then 6, began experiencing some health problems. Honestly, there were so many over the years that I cannot even recall which symptoms they were. What I do recall is standing in an examination room at Children’s Hospital with 6 doctors at some level of residency or certification analyzing my daughter like she were not even a person, frightening her into an hysteric panic attack and finally diagnosing her with Cerebral Palsy without even confirming through a blood test. In retrospect, this was somewhat of a personal breakthrough to realize how flawed our medical system is when it comes to Mold Exposure/Illness and what an absurdly inaccurate diagnosis that was. But it also left me feeling helpless not knowing how to help my daughter who was showing multiple neurological symptoms of toxic mold exposure.

Then in the summer of 2010, while on vacation our family collectively experienced toxic mold exposure over a 3-week period and that is when things really began spiraling down. Our eldest daughter was a ballerina at The School for Creative and Performing Arts in their new building on Central Pkwy, a former canal. All three girls, plus myself, experienced early onset symptoms headaches, nausea, fatigue, body aches, dizziness. My husband was the only one immune. Lizzie began to develop severe anxiety, OCD tendencies, fears and inability to heal from dance injuries. Her ability to organize herself and perform certain types of thinking declined. She became very easily frustrated and her immunity was being broken down. She experienced depression and Lizzie was diagnosed with a heart murmur.

Our youngest daughter was 6 in 2010. Her immunity was being broken down as well, more dramatically, incurring whooping cough, repeated rounds of strep throat and Scarlet Fever. Joy was angry, defiant and threatening suicide. Her emotional state became a clear indicator of whether she had unknowingly experienced mold that day. There was an immediate and direct correlation.

Our middle daughter was 11. The canary in the coalmine, Zoe is the most sensitive. Not only did she experience the early onset symptoms (as mentioned), the fatigue was so extreme that I found her sprawled out across the floor reaching under her bed to get something. She had fallen asleep in mid-movement. After that, she began falling asleep in her meals, she fell asleep playing a board game with her sister, she even fell asleep walking towards the stairs. Zoë was not awake more than an hour to an hour and a half a day. This is when we discovered that another family in her school was experiencing toxic mold illness as well. They had a head start on our family, leading us to Dr. Ritchie Shoemaker's website at which point I realized that my girls had inherited Lyme Disease and their co-infections from me. This is important because after 3 weeks of sleeping all day, the Mold Illness then triggered her Lyme symptoms making it impossible for her to sleep more than an hour or two a day. Her nerves were rapidly de-myelinating and she was showing MS symptoms as well as having heart/lung problems and turning blue. I began homeschooling Zoë as well as nursing her back to health through herbs, essential oils, nutrition, etc.

In late January 2011, we hired a contractor to gut and remediate the basement. This was on top of what we'd already done. I outlined the containment protocol, per Dr. Shoemaker's books, emphasizing the critical importance of containing the space properly. Two days later, Zoe put her hand on her side, turned toward me and asked, "What is this?" Her spleen was bulging and ready to rupture. We packed up our cats, toiletries and picked up Lizzie and Joy from their respective schools. We spent the night at a Red Roof Inn, 5 people, 2 beds, 2 cats. I sent my 6-year old to school in her jammies the next day and was proud of being able to provide her a lunch. The school was distressed over the dress code violation. After two weeks of the Red Roof Inn, we were able to move into a Towne Suites, still 2 beds but now with a little galley kitchen and small living area. That became home for the next 2 ½ years. During that time, Joy changed schools to a fabulous private school. She began the healing journey and joined the basketball team. Unbeknownst to us, the school gym had been refinished over a school break. That is when we discovered that she had become chemically sensitive as a result of the toxin overload from mold. She was unable to walk for 3 days and forced to quit the team.

It was a relief to have a place to live, though it was expensive. We were not poor and yet, now we were paying as much for living at the hotel as for our home mortgage as well. I honestly thought we might end up homeless. It was also inconvenient. Three girls, two schools, plus homeschool. I was driving 5 ½ hours/day just to get the kids to school and their activities, in addition to managing peoples healing protocols, and grocery shopping, as well as searching for remediation help for our home.

As for my own Mold Illness experience, it is quite fuzzy. My memory has always been astoundingly vivid. However, mold wiped much of that clean. So along with the same types of symptoms as the girls experienced with special emphasis on MS type symptoms, shooting pains, slurred speech, tripping on nothing, my brain could barely function much less manage. One experience in particular stands out, perhaps because it was the first of many times that this happened: I had gone to our neighborhood Krogers, once inside I hadn't a clue of where to find items. The aisle signs helped. The shock really hit me as I stepped out of Krogers front door. The door opened up into a strange new, a parking lot. I must have driven there, though who knew which car was mine? Gotta love those clickers! The car was located and the I started the journey home. However, when I arrived, there was another surprise. This was our former house where our children were born, not the house we currently owned nor the hotel where we lived.

We have spent 11 years now moving through the constant trauma of changing schools, jobs, homes, cities, doctors, friends and roots in search of safe housing, safe schooling, safe restaurants and doctors offices, never knowing if we can safely take a trip somewhere—before COVID, the airplanes were a hotbed of germs, rental cars are often smokey or moldy, lodging is dicey no matter how high end. My personal health has declined more rapidly, specifically vision, as a result of house-hunting for years in addition to remediating ourselves due to incompetent remediation experiences. Ultimately, mold has defined our lives I had read about families like this in Dr. Shoemaker's books. It was unfathomable to me. NEVER did I believe that would become our own story, and never knowing when it will derail our lives again or how!!!

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,  
Priscilla McMaster Luh