

Chairperson Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee,

My name is Kim Georgeton, and I am a parent from Lebanon, OH. I am writing to express my support for House Bill 561.

As a parent, I believe it is critical that schools and daycare providers communicate honestly with families regarding vaccination requirements and exemptions under Ohio law.

In my experience, schools often misrepresent the facts about vaccines required for admittance at daycares and schools. They often tell parents that their children can't attend particular events, field trips or other activities if they don't have a particular vaccine. This leads to frustration and sometimes ostracism for the parents and the children. Parents sometimes don't know where to turn for help and meanwhile their constitutional rights are violated and they end up being discriminated against.

Untruthful communication to parents violates our ability to exercise our parental rights under Ohio law, which clearly allows exemptions. Yet the information most often provided to parents does not explain that we have this option. This lack of transparency creates confusion and unnecessary pressure for families, effectively forcing them into a medical intervention for their child that they may not want, because schools imply or threaten that their child will be removed if they do not comply. Parents should be able to make informed decisions without coercion.

HB 561 is important because it helps ensure that schools and daycare providers communicate accurately with parents and follow Ohio law regarding exemptions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important legislation.

Respectfully,

Kim Georgeton

Lebanon, OH