

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

My name is Tom Burke, I am a Captain on the Cleveland Fire Dept. I am also paramedic, and as such practice medicine on a daily basis. I believe it is discriminatory and illegal to force vaccinations, or any medicine of any kind. Further, it is blatant discrimination to favor one group over another based on the medicines they take. I am sure everyone is aware of the HIPPA laws. My job as a firefighter, as well as my wife's as a teacher could be impacted by unfair mandates to take medicines we may not feel appropriate for us. My son is a top high school diver in the state. There are only a few towers for these athletes to use for dive practice. For the last year, he has had to drive one hour in each direction to Youngstown State University for practice. After picking up/dropping off several students that do not have a drivers license, he often comes home late at night, struggling to complete his schoolwork. This has had an enormous impact on his overall well-being. Cleveland State University, the closest tower for diving, has said they will require vaccines for anyone to enter. There is no reason for healthy high school athletes to be denied public access based on what medicines they take.

I leave you with this to consider; in my capacity as a Captain/Paramedic, if I am called to an 911 emergency and identify a life threatening situation, such as a massive heart attack, that patient must consent t to any treatment or transport I can provide. If they do not want help, I am legally unable to render any care even, if I know they are going to die. Why is this? It is because all health decisions reside with the individual and no one else! Certainly not the Government. Would urge all Ohioans to consider; no matter their opinion of this vaccine, our right to choose our medicine is a cornerstone of our freedom that must be protected!

Thank you for your time,

Tom Burke