

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee:

My name is Jamie Stout and I am a wife, mother, consultant, and homeschool teacher. Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony in favor of HB 248. I am privileged to be the mother of four amazing children ages 11 to 1. I have carefully sought to research and pray through decisions regarding all aspects of raising my children. One such aspect is whether or not to provide them with vaccinations. Based on the research I have done, the beliefs of our family, and the specific needs of my children, we have chosen not to vaccinate. I firmly believe that it is as much my right not to vaccinate as it is the right of any other Ohioan to vaccinate their children. These decisions are private medical decisions and should be treated as such.

However, in the course of my short eleven years as a parent, my children have been discriminated against in one very specific area- healthcare. In my experience, pediatric offices are increasingly forcing vaccine use in their practices in one of three ways. The first is they completely refuse service to children who are not vaccinated. They will not even allow these children into the practice. The second is that they will remove current patients who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated if they are not willing to “catch-up” on vaccines per the schedule put forth by the Centers for Disease Control. The third way is that they will force parents to sign a vaccine refusal form. It is a legal document that says many things with which I personally do not agree. I have repeatedly refused to sign these forms which are designed to shame and scare parents into vaccinating their children. The form can be found online at www.aap.org/en-us/documents/immunization_refusaltovaccinate.pdf. Many practices are forcing parents to sign this form in order to remain in the practice. Our current pediatrician, who has recently been acquired by Central Ohio Primary Care (COPC), is now requiring this form due to the policies of COPC. So, again, my children are without a pediatrician because of vaccine discrimination.

As a result of vaccine discrimination, my children have been asked to leave two different pediatric practices and we have been asked to sign a vaccine refusal document at three pediatric practices, resulting in us being forced to leave. We have also called countless practices to see if they will accept my children only to be told that they will not see my children because they are unvaccinated.

This is not freedom of choice. This is not a concern for the health of Ohio’s children. This is flat out discrimination and hurts our children. My children will now have to be seen by a family practice without the specific medical training of a pediatrician due to this discrimination. This should not be allowed in the State of Ohio.

Please support this bill and ensure it provides protection from ALL types of vaccine discrimination on ALL Ohioans. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jamie Stout