

House Health Committee
Proponent Testimony on House Bill 248
By Shari Toth
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Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee, my name is Shari Toth and I appreciate the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 248.

I am a business owner and mother of 2 children. I support House Bill 248 because every citizen of Ohio deserves the right to freedom of choice for their own health and what is injected in their body. Some people make a choice to not get a vaccine ever, some people make a choice to not get a vaccine right now but will choose later in time, some people are immunocompromised and are medically recommended to not get a vaccine, etc. I write this as someone that has been vaccinated in the past and as a mother that has vaccinated my children against some diseases, but also has made the choice to not have them get annual flu shots or some other newer vaccines. Everyone should be given that freedom of choice and not be discriminated against, bullied, or shamed because of their decision.

One argument that I have heard against this bill is that immunocompromised people should have the freedom to enter a business and know that everyone in the business is vaccinated if they themselves can't be vaccinated. However, without this bill, that business could require that immunocompromised individual to be vaccinated to enter, which throws out that argument as they no longer have the freedom regardless. This bill would protect that individuals choice to not vaccinate.

Another argument that I've heard against this bill is that it infringes on a business owner's right to establish their own business practices. However, in 2006, Ohio voters approved a smoking ban in public places and places of employment. One of the main reasons of that ban was to provide protection against the health hazards of ingesting second hand smoke. This ban requires a business owner to act in a particular manner. Ohio voters chose the right to freedom for their own health. House Bill 248 continues that right to freedom by allowing the citizen to make the choice of whether or not to have a vaccine enter their body. A business owner should have the right to suggest or encourage vaccination, but not to coerce, force, or threaten through firing, demotions, lack of raises, etc.

It is extremely important to me that this bill contain that freedom in both the private sector as well as the public sector. It is also key that this legislation protect an individual's right to privacy and prohibit others from requesting vaccination status.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to provide testimony on the need for and urgency of House Bill 248. I urge you to consider voting to advance this bill!

Sincerely,

Shari Toth