

Wednesday, June 3, 2021

To: Members of the Ohio House Health Committee  
Re: HB 248

Dear Ohio House Health Committee,

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the Ohio House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 248. My name is Megan Bachman, and I am employed as a leader at a local hospital, in fact, one of the public opponents to House Bill 248. I am in full support of House Bill 248. Its title outlines the two basic tenants of the bill, Vaccine Choice and Anti-Discrimination, to which I will provide proponent testimony.

#### Vaccine Choice

The claim that House Bill 248 would assuredly put Ohioans at risk for potential outbreaks, threaten the stability of our economy, and jeopardize the way we live, learn, work, and celebrate life assumes that upon passage all or a significant majority of individuals would no longer pursue immunizations for themselves or children and as a result disease would run rampant. **I argue that the passage of House Bill 248 would heavily encourage, out of positive necessity, healthcare providers, health officials, individuals, parents, families, young adults, and employees to seek and receive true informed consent.** This active dialogue between a patient/parent and provider does not exist consistently today. **Individuals and parents are often coerced to pursue healthcare decisions using scare tactics, incomplete coverage of benefits and risks, and divisive language.**

Vaccine messaging has largely omitted the details which provide complete informed consent. See an example of a recent [clinical trial](#) examining how targeted messaging approaches would encourage immunization uptake for COVID-19 vaccines. The study fails to include messaging and pertinent details regarding the risks and benefits in an individualized manner for the intended patient encouraging informed consent of their healthcare decision. **An active informed consent dialogue would enable all parties to learn about the diseases the immunizations are intended to prevent, examine the immunization ingredients and content, review research, and empower healthcare providers to provide support for and for individuals to make informed healthcare decisions.**

Ultimately, as a result of House Bill 248 passage we could see no change in the choices individuals make regarding immunization. I do believe individuals would feel empowered in their healthcare decisions and assuming immunizations provide irrefutable safety profiles and immunity from life-threatening, but vaccine-preventable diseases, individuals and parents would likely adopt immunization practices as they do today. However, if there happened to be a shift in individual choice regarding immunization following passage of House Bill 248, it should serve as an excellent opportunity to seek to understand these now informed healthcare decisions rather than promoting segregation, restricted access and penalties that have already been evident in our communities today.

#### Anti-Discrimination

While current Ohio law allows for school immunization exemptions for medical, religious, and reasons of conscience, and most businesses allow for flexibility in regard to vaccinations, it is not enough to protect all Ohioans from the reality of discrimination and retaliation based on medical status in all environments. This tenant of the bill is most impactful and **critical to protecting individual's civil rights**

**by providing safe, non-hostile, non-divisive environments for Ohioans to support a stable economy, prosper in the way we live, learn, work, practice our faith and celebrate life.**

Segregating, preventing access, and penalizing individuals based on medical status is an appalling future to consider. We have seen evidence of discrimination come to light in private businesses and industries across the nation already. Regardless of one's support or opposition for House Bill 248 this active discrimination based on medical status should, at minimum, give one significant pause. **Preventing to urgently enact legislation supporting Ohioan's personal medical choice and privacy openly permits discrimination based on medical status.** I struggle to consider how permitting this discrimination is any different than the race-based discrimination endured in our nation's not so distant past.

Lastly, as evidenced by my proponent testimony, the claim made by the collective organizations opposing House Bill 248 that they represent 1.3 million+ Ohioans is misleading. It misrepresents the scope of opposing Ohioans that are associated with these organizations. It is implying that each of the 1.3 million+ Ohioans represented by these organization aligns with the opponent testimony, and reasons for such opposition, and is a misrepresentation worth noting.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to provide proponent testimony on the need for and urgency of House Bill 248 in its entirety.

Sincerely,  
Megan Bachman