

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

My name is Holly Barton, and I am a quality engineer working in the aerospace industry. I am also a wife and mother. I support House Bill 248 because it protects my ability to make informed decisions and to take personal responsibility for my own and my family's health and wellbeing when it comes to vaccinations.

I heard many comments and concerns from committee members during the first hearing of this bill about the rights of immunocompromised individuals. I urge those committee members to consider my rights as well. Don't I have the right to determine how much and what kinds of risk I will accept relative to medical treatments? Don't I, my husband, and my daughter, have the right to the same opportunities and access to goods, services, education and employment as all Ohioans? Shouldn't these be granted without fear of medical discrimination? Shouldn't these be granted without being coerced into a medical intervention which may cause us more harm than the thing it is intended to protect against? House Bill 248 offers these protections, as well as important measures to ensure individuals are truly informed of their right to decline such interventions.

I am capable of deciding what is best for me when it comes to if, when, and for what to be vaccinated. The overall health and wellbeing of our friends, neighbors and community are also factors I consider when making these choices. I use research, data, and the guidance of recognized professionals when making healthcare decisions. This is the same approach I use in my career as a quality engineer working in the aerospace industry. I believe my fellow Ohioans will also use their unique knowledge and skills to make the choices that best serve them and their communities (including members of those communities who may be immunocompromised!), with much better outcomes than any "one-size-fits-all" prescription or mandate.

There are more than 11.5 million Ohio residents. It would be impossible for this committee, school boards, CEOs, or other entities requiring a vaccination to understand the more than 11.5 million reasons a person will or won't, can or can't receive any particular vaccination.

Especially considering the concerning precedents already being set by some entities in Ohio, as described by Representative Gross in the May 18th hearing of this bill, I urge you to support this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

For Freedom,

Holly Barton