

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 Casey Berquist and I am a former teacher, and now a stay-at-home mom. The reason I support House Bill 248 is because vaccine passports will cause damage to our lives. The damage will come in many different areas of my life.

First, my husband is our sole provider of income and when his place of employment forces his hand on vaccines, he will have to quit his job. I know that he is not alone at his company in making his personal choice to decline the Covid shot. If a high percentage of employees have to quit their jobs because of forced vaccination, significant damage will come to my community in Findlay. We would be forced to move and search for employment that allows for medical freedom, which may be out of state.

My three children go to public school and we may lose that privilege soon. As a trained teacher and someone who grew up going to public school, I know how important education is and have seen the impact education makes on children. I chose to keep my children home from school this year because I did not want them wearing masks all day or being to exposed to the fear that is running rampant in our state right now. My three boys deserve to go to school next year and all the years following without being forced to take a vaccination against their will. I need to know that my children will be able to go to school without being segregated into classrooms or areas of the school based on their vaccination status. I need to know that they will be able to play baseball, basketball and soccer without being discriminated against because of their vaccination status.

Upon entering Meijer on Friday to buy food for my family, I noticed the new signage on the door. The sign posted stated, "if you are fully vaccinated you no longer need to wear a mask." Reading these words sent shivers down my spine. To me, this is the beginning of the end for my freedom to buy my family the healthy food we need to thrive and be healthy. They were not asking for proof of vaccination status at this time, but what happens when they do? Am I going to be denied entry to the grocery store? Am I going to be denied the right to buy apples, grapes and bananas for my children to snack on? Am I going to be denied the right to provide food for my family because of my vaccination status? I urge everyone to think about those thoughts.

I am your neighbor. I attend church with you. I pass you in the grocery store. Our children or grandchildren play sports together. I voted for you to represent my voice. We are the same. We are free people who take responsibility for our own lives and our own health. I do not need to show paperwork to move about freely in my community and neither do you.

This bill, HB248, is important to pass through quickly to allow my family to continue being sovereign beings. We love our community; we love our state and we love our country. We love them for the reasons they were founded on and it is important that we continue to fight for those values.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide testimony on the need for and urgency of House Bill 248.

Sincerely,

Casey Berquist