

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 Allison Dorco, and I am pro-vaccine. I am blessed to have given birth to two beautiful girls. I stand before you lucky to still be a mother to both of those beautiful girls. I have a vaccine injured daughter, and I am pro-vaccine.

When my daughters were born we followed a normal vaccine schedule. We gave them the recommended vaccines at the recommended ages. I didn't worry about overloading their immune system, I didn't check the risks on the CDC website for each shot. I didn't weigh any risks.

At 12 months of age my baby girl began to bruise. In the span of a few hours what began with one dark bruise and a fussy baby became alarming. She had bruises where she sat in the highchair, bruises from her diaper. I held her all night while she fussed. I searched "bruising" on Google, I called a Telehealth nurse. By morning there were bruises all over her body. They were from my hands. The hands I was providing her comfort with bruised her little body. Her nose bled. She cried, and cried. Her gums were purple, her tongue was bruised. Her doctor sent us to the hospital. We were rushed into the ER, that's when she began bleeding, from everywhere. The blood poured from her ears and soaked my shirt.

The doctor came in and said her bloodwork had shown a low platelet count. Normal blood platelet count is 150-450. Our baby's was 2. Anything under 10 is deadly. She had a high white blood cell count. There were two possible diagnosis- Leukemia or something I hadn't heard of "ITP". They couldn't confirm which because she was so sick and frail she couldn't undergo the bone marrow testing necessary to rule out leukemia. They suggested a sterilized blood plasma product called IVig to attempt to rebuild her immune system in order to get her platelet counts high enough to undergo the bone marrow testing. IVig had its own risks, and it might not work, but we had to try. They said we didn't have till tomorrow to decide. She wouldn't live through the night if it didn't work.

She was placed in the intensive care unit, sedated, and hooked to machines. A nurse rolled in a crash cart. It sat next to the metal crib that my baby was confined to. I could look at her but not hold her. The nurse read her vitals every 15 minutes. That night felt like an eternity. I watched every breath she took, I prayed to the Lord to heal our beautiful baby. Morning came, and by the grace of God the IVig had helped. Bone marrow testing proved that she didn't have Leukemia which was a huge blessing, but she was diagnosed with ITP. Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura.

We endured a long road of hematologist appointments and blood work. Our daughter would go on to be ill for 6 months. We had appointments every few days. She couldn't practice walking because she could fall and hit her head, she couldn't ride in a stroller because it could shake her brain and cause hemorrhage. She couldn't go to childcare, or church nursery. Life had changed severely.

I was floored when the hospital doctors and our pediatrician confirmed that they suspected this was caused by the MMRV vaccine she received at her 12 month checkup. They

reported it to the vaccine adverse effect reporting center. I couldn't believe it, I'm PRO Vaccine.

I was more surprised to see that ITP is in fact listed as a rare side effect of the vaccine on the CDC's website. It states "Immune thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP) is a disorder that decreases the body's ability to stop bleeding. It can happen after both natural measles infection as well as after getting the MMR vaccine. However, it is usually not life threatening"

Usually not life threatening. Not always. We were one of the unlucky few who ended up with our child fighting for her life. When our daughter had won the fight and was placed in remission from her ITP we began having discussions with our pediatrician. What types of vaccines are safe for her? What isn't? Should she have her subsequent MMR vaccines? Can she have an exemption and still go to school? I never thought I would have to consider any of these questions. Our doctor laid out a plan in which we would vaccinate her carefully, and she had a lot to catch up on. But we would avoid live vaccines. For everyone in the family when possible. No flu mist, no other live shots. I neglected to share the cause of her illness except with those closest to us. I still believe many vaccines benefits outweigh their risks. I'm not here to promote fear.

Our doctor offered us an exemption for mmr but had a suggestion as well in which we would do the vaccine with many safeguards around it so she wouldn't end up as sick as before if her ITP returned. There was a benefit to getting the vaccine as it caused her to be protected from measles which could also make the ITP resurface. We weighed these risks with our doctor and made our decision based on risk versus benefit. This time, with safeguards in place, she had no reaction to the and she is fully vaccinated. I have a vaccine injured child, and I am STILL pro-vaccine.

The difference now is we weigh the risks of each vaccine. Risk versus benefit. These decisions need to be made between a patient or patient's parent and their trusted physician. We can't have these decisions be mandated by an employer or a school district. There isn't anyone else who should want to make that choice. The choice to continue to vaccinate after what our daughter went through can only be made by someone who has studied medicine, has experience in the field, knows her personal history, and has a vested interest in keeping her alive. That is my husband and I, and her doctor. The choice to get some vaccines requires our daughter to undergo weeks of testing and bloodwork. Our pediatrician has been encouraging every step of the way and supported us through the bloodwork necessary for her before and in the weeks after the vaccines that could cause her trouble. These are not easy choices. They come with anxiety and heartache.

I support House Bill 248 because with it, my daughter won't be discriminated against if the doctor and I choose not to give her the mRNA vaccine. The discrimination has already began. No one unvaccinated can go on cruises, vaccine exemptions don't matter. They are setting up vaccinated sections at sports events. There is talk of requiring the unvaccinated only to mask in certain areas. Does my daughter deserve to be discriminated against because the doctor has stated that the mRNA vaccine hasn't been studied enough for ITP patients? Should I have to relive this story to every person who wants to judge us for declining the Covid vaccine? Should I not be able to weigh risk verses benefit on the Covid shot like we have on all the others? My children have a very low risk to serious covid

complications. The ones who have a high risk should get vaccinated. I am not attempting to scare anyone away from them. The vaccinated protected my daughter at a time when she was unable to be vaccinated.

The idea that every vaccine is safe for every person is faulty. Trying to set up different rules for those who have been vaccinated and those who can't or don't is discrimination. Our constitution protects us against that. This bill to expand the verbiage to specifically include vaccine discrimination is exactly what my family needs. My daughter deserves the liberty to not have to announce to the world that she is unvaccinated against covid. This violates her privacy and her freedom. Our physician can and will write her a medical exemption, but he can't exempt her from discrimination. Only you can prevent discrimination by passing House Bill 248. My daughter has been hurt enough by a vaccine and should not have to endure unnecessary judgement from the public because she can't have this vaccine. House Bill 248 has my support because it would ensure that she is protected against discrimination surrounding a decision that has been carefully made to protect her life. Thank you.