

I am a physician writing this letter in support of HB 248. I would like to start by stating I personally have no issues with taking vaccinations. I have had all recommended FDA-approved vaccinations, and I have never missed my annual flu shot. Working at the hospital, I have seen plenty of tragic deaths related to the recent SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and have even heard horror stories from colleagues of young healthy patients succumbing to the now infamous inflammatory syndrome prompted by the virus. I was very encouraged that both the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccine trials conclusively reduced symptom severity and hospitalizations. It certainly seemed to be a promising scientific development with reason to be optimistic particularly for high-risk groups. However, as the experimental vaccine became mainstream the media narrative gave me a sense of unease. SARS-CoV-2 vaccination status was becoming bound to virtue. Celebrities and politicians were proudly posting vaccine pictures on social media encouraging cooperation and subtly shaming dissenters. It had now become our ethical and moral responsibility to get the experimental vaccine. The foundation was being laid to openly discriminate against those who were hesitant. Word started to emerge of “vaccine passports”; that we may be required to have proof of vaccination to attend certain events. This continued to evolve and was starting to be applied more broadly to employment opportunities or even access to certain grocery stores. This made my stomach turn. It seemed blatantly inconsistent with the premise of a free society. Since then, we have reached the point where people close to me have been pressured to receive the injection to maintain employment, attend group gatherings, or simply to avoid being the butt of a joke. When we have no control over our own flesh and blood, do we truly have freedom? I agree that individual determinism does not invariably supersede the needs of the group. You cannot drive your car on the wrong

side of the road and hide behind the cloak of 'freedom' when an innocent person is inadvertently injured.

There is certainly merit to writing population-based health measures into law to maintain public health and public safety but our body is a sacred gift. It is the physical representation of the soul in time and space. Based on a rationale interpretation of the social contract laid out in our founding documents, even if the perfect vaccine was developed it would be inappropriate to limit an individual's participation in society for refusing. To take it a step further, it seems to me that all the three FDA approval-exempt vaccines for SARS-CoV-2 are far from perfection. There have been 3,544 American deaths and 12,619 serious injuries as of April 23, according to the CDC's Vaccine Adverse Event Reports System database (VAERS). By comparison, flu vaccines of which 195 million people received last year compared to 153 million COVID vaccines this year correspond to about 20-30 death reports a year. Studies of VAERS data have shown that only 1-10% of vaccine-related deaths are reported, suggesting the true death count could be much higher. In the first four months of availability, the SARS-CoV-2 vaccines have had more adverse reports than any single vaccine has had over the past 31 years. This risk profile may be favorable in older individuals where SARS-CoV-2 mortality rates are as high as 1:37; however, for an otherwise healthy 28-year-old like myself the safer approach may be focusing on optimizing common-sense health habits and evidence-based vitamin supplementation. The risk-benefit analysis of taking the experimental vaccine is for every Ohioan to weigh individually without positive or negative reinforcement from our government. I bring up the data regarding the SARS-CoV-2 only to illustrate an important point: if we are willing to allow something with serious unanswered questions and no long-term data to

become mandated, where will the line be drawn? I believe that this bill creates that line. It is an important impasse beyond which individual's medical and there by individual freedom will not be encroached. Thank you for hearing my testimony and have a fine day.

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