

HB 248 PROPONENT TESTIMONY

Sara Gleason

May 22, 2021

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and honorable members of the Health Committee,

My name is Sara Gleason. I am a resident and constituent of the great state of Ohio, a college educated social scientist, a business owner, mother and military spouse, and **I am writing to share my support for Sub HB 248.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding Sub HB 248.

As a family that has lived in support of this nation through military service for over twenty years, I know what it means to sacrifice for our country and for others. I have seen too many friends make the ultimate sacrifice for freedom and have seen too many folded flags handed to their loved ones to ever take discussions about freedom lightly. So when I write today and speak of freedom, please understand that it is without hyperbole.

For over a year now, decisions made in the name of "safety" and "emergency" and "public health" have all too often disregarded the voices of the very public it claims to protect and any voices of science and health that run contrary to their narrative. Recent campaigns for mass vaccination have continued on this trajectory. We must stop allowing entities who think they know what is best for individuals - without actually knowing anything about their personal ideological, cultural or health landscapes - to have a say in the personal choices of others. Businesses, employers and governments should not be a party to the medical decisions of individual Ohioans and their families.

I suspect this legislation will lead to robust discussions about the merits of vaccination itself, though it should not. The issue at hand is far more fundamental than that. One could think that vaccination is the "coolest thing since sliced bread" and believe that all vaccines are "safe and effective", yet still understand that any effort to mandate, incentivize, coerce or in any way tether the consumption of a vaccine to employment, commerce, education or participation in society, is entirely antithetical to individual sovereignty and basic human and civil rights.

The problem is that no medical treatment or program is universally safe or effective. By the very nature of health and humanity there is no such thing as "one size fits all". This includes vaccination. There are legitimate concerns about the safety of these injections (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). There are legitimate questions about efficacy (7, 8, 9, 10).

And as is true for all things in science, there is no actual consensus about their use (11, 12, 13, 14). Most importantly there are individuals and families like mine who who hold religious and sincerely held beliefs and legitimate medical reasons to choose not to accept all vaccines.

And so this is where discussions about freedom become crucial considerations. In life, there is inherent risk. It is unrealistic to expect freedom from injury, illness or infection, natural disaster or accident. Similarly, there is no freedom from bad things happening to good people. Nor freedom from hurt feelings or broken hearts. There is no freedom from another person's bad decisions. Or even our own. To live, is to experience risk.

And so, when risk exists (and please remember that it does) we must be afforded the freedom to make our own risk assessments and cost-benefit analyses. We have the God-given right to form our own thoughts, express our own opinions, and choose what to do with our own bodies. My family should be able to consider all the facets of our personal health histories and landscapes, our religious compass and our cultural experiences when making our health decisions. And none of that is anyone else's business. Our God-given and inalienable right to individual sovereignty and medical freedom and our constitutionally protected rights to privacy must be protected. Individuals should not be marginalized or discriminated against for their medical choices. Medical freedom is as fundamental a human and civil right as any other. I know because my husband, his father, my grandfather and countless loved ones fought for them.

I confess it grieves my heart that I even need to write this testimony. That I am here, with so many others, essentially petitioning you to uphold your sacred oaths and protect the God-given and constitutionally protected rights of your constituents. All of this should go without saying. None of this should be necessary. And yet, some employers (15) and businesses, schools (16) and governments (17) are welcoming discriminatory policies in the name of safety and public health.

It is clear we need to fortify the rights that are already ours inalienably. No person should be coerced, manipulated, mandated or otherwise forced to consume a product in order to work, seek an education, or otherwise participate in society. Likewise, no person should be coerced, manipulated, mandated or otherwise forced to disclose their private health information. What's more, no person should be discriminated against, stigmatized or segregated for their sincerely held beliefs or their private medical choices. It is unfair, unreasonable and wholly unacceptable to discount, disregard, diminish anyone for their medical decisions.

Make no mistake the climate of the day is ripe for all of this. It is happening. And it will continue to happen if we do not reject it outright. Such policies have no place in free societies.

Please stand for your fellow Ohioans who cannot vaccinate for medical reasons or for sincerely held and religious reasons or simply because they may desire more time to make their choice.

Please vote yes on Sub HB 248 and stand for Ohioans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara Gleason

Warren County, OH

1 <https://www.openvaers.com/covid-data>

2 <https://covidvaccinevictims.com>

3 <https://circleofmamas.com/health-news/12-year-old-suffers-severe-reaction-in-covid-vaccine-clinical-trial/>

4 <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/major-european-nations-suspend-use-of-astrazeneca-vaccine>

5 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/22/health/cdc-heart-teens-vaccination.html>

6 <https://jameslyonsweiler.com/2021/05/17/study-finds-patterns-in-vaers-data-that-provide-evidence-of-causality/>

7 <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-departments/past-breakthrough-data.html>

8 <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/the-shock-and-reality-of-catching-covid-after-being-vaccinated>

9 <https://www.cbssports.com/mlb/news/yankees-covid-outbreak-up-to-nine-cases-cdc-to-look-into-breakthrough-positives/>

10 <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/01/04/peter-doshi-pfizer-and-modernas-95-effective-vaccines-we-need-more-details-and-the-raw-data/>

11 <https://aapsonline.org/open-letter-from-physicians-to-universities-reverse-covid-vaccine-mandates/>

12 <https://faculty.utrgv.edu/eleftherios.gkioulekas/zelenko/afd-paper-on-experimental-vaccines.pdf>

13 <https://news.yahoo.com/dr-peter-mccullough-tells-tucker-222813707.html>

14 <https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1244/rr-1?>

15 https://www.theepochtimes.com/mkt_breakingnews/delta-air-lines-to-force-new-employees-to-get-covid-19-vaccines_3817182.html

16 <https://universitybusiness.com/state-by-state-look-at-colleges-requiring-vaccines/>

17 <https://www.ktvb.com/article/news/regional/oregon-vaccine-proof-mask-requirement/277-ebd40a58-6338-4a63-b325-5e5c341c2047>