

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 Julie Kumpik. The reason I support House Bill 248 is because I am a mother of two children who cannot take the Covid 19 vaccine, and will face discrimination without the passing of this bill. Between 2019 and 2020, my oldest child went through months of exams, testing, and meetings with doctors and the people who now make up his care team because we suspected that he was on the Autism spectrum. As a result of diagnostic and genetic testing, we found out that he has the MTHFR genetic mutation. With further evaluation, we have every reason to believe his sibling and I have it as well and that his father is a carrier. What does that mean for us? Methylenetetrahydrofolate reductase (MTHFR) is an enzyme produced by this specific gene. Simply put, the job of the MTHFR enzyme is to help the body process and absorb folate (vitamin B9). With the genetic mutation, the MTHFR gene malfunctions and causes B9 deficiency. Studies have been done that estimate that up to half of the US population are affected by, or are carriers of this genetic mutation. Some have little to no issues, others have more severe deficiency and are at higher risk for complications. People with the MTHFR mutation are at a higher risk of:

cardiovascular and thromboembolic diseases (specifically blood clots, stroke, embolism, and heart attacks) people with two copies of the MTHFR C677T mutation are at a 3-fold increase of premature cardiovascular disease.

depression

anxiety

bipolar disorder

schizophrenia

colon cancer

acute leukemia

chronic pain and fatigue

neurological disorders

nerve pain

migraines

recurrent miscarriages in women of child-bearing age

pregnancies with neural tube defects, like spina bifida and anencephaly

hypothyroidism

diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure

obesity

Autoimmune disorders

Gastrointestinal disorders (gastroparesis, IBS, Crohns, Functional Dyspepsia, Ulcerative Colitis, Acid reflux)

Dysautonomia (irregular response of the central nervous system)

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Our family already has a few of the conditions on this list. Given his health history and the results of genetic testing, we know that my oldest has the more severe (two copy) mutation. That means that his brother and I likely also have the more severe type. Knowing the susceptibility to cardiac and autoimmune disease that already exists with the MTHFR mutation, I have massive concerns about what complications the Covid-19 vaccine could cause for me and my children. There have been numerous reports to VAERS regarding cardiovascular events in people who have received the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Most recently the CDC is investigating myocarditis in young people after receiving the vaccine. There is also an increased risk of an overreaction of the immune system (cytokine storm) that can lead to organ failure happening after receiving the vaccine. My children are at an incredibly high risk for a life threatening reaction if they take this vaccine. Without legislation to protect families like mine, we would be unable to live a normal life in Ohio. Without HB248, I would be forced to make a decision that could cause irreparable physical or emotional harm to my children. That is an impossible choice for me. I cannot knowingly choose to physically harm my children with the vaccine, and I cannot force them to leave their friends, family, doctors and excellent schools behind by moving to a state that has already passed legislation banning vaccine discrimination. Autistic children do not handle major changes in their life very well. My son experienced anger, depression, and complete withdrawal because of the three months the schools were shut down. We are still working through that a year later. I don't want to think about how long it would take him to work through having to leave everything he has known since he was a year old. If no legislation exists to protect Ohioans, the discrimination we

have already faced will pale in comparison what those who are not vaccinated will face. We have spent the past year being unwelcome in the majority of businesses here because my son has sensory processing issues and very few places would accept his exemption from the mask mandate. In other states (Oregon being a good example) where the legislature has not passed a bill like HB248, those who are not vaccinated are already running into issues. Businesses and Universities ask for proof of vaccination before they will let anyone pass through the doors. Employers are asking for or in some cases demanding disclosure of vaccine status, and terminating employment for individuals who have not taken the vaccine. These same companies have absolutely no regard for an individual's privacy regarding their personal health choices. There are reports coming out of Ohio about these same things happening, and a prime example is the Governor's "vax-a-million" program. These types of measures are resulting in segregation of the portion of the population that cannot, or choose not to take the vaccine. This vaccine, still considered "experimental" and under an Emergency Use Authorization, should not be the only way for people to live their lives freely. Ohioans have spent over a year not being permitted to make choices regarding our health because of the mandates put forth by the Governor. It is time for the freedom to choose what works best for each individual to be put back in the hands of the people. Without HB248, Ohioans won't have the right to choose what we do or don't put in our bodies without fear of retribution and that is why it is absolutely vital for this bill to become law. Thank you again for allowing the opportunity to provide testimony on the need for HB248