

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 Danielle Page and I am a single mother of a 7-year-old daughter whom I adopted from foster care after first welcoming her into my home at the age of 2. I am not a doctor or a scientist but I *am* an educated woman working in the field of higher education and have spent years earning multiple degrees in education that have taught me the importance and power of critical thinking and civic engagement. Further, my work in Higher Education has trained me to speak out against injustice and oppression and to work towards inclusivity of others, not in spite of, but *because of* the value that each individual's identity, values, and beliefs brings to our community. **I support House Bill 248 because I believe the human will to choose what is best for their body is a fundamental right that should not be infringed upon for the sake of the idea of "common good".**

The bill introduced by Representative Gross is ***common sense protection*** of Ohio citizens' fundamental rights to choose what happens to their body without having to likewise choose whether or not to be a part of society, maintain employment, or have access to that which is needed for survival.

During the civil rights era, we saw people discriminating against black citizens in the name of "public health," requiring them to drink from separate water fountains though there was no evidence that supported the claim that they were a danger to anyone. Jews were claimed by Hitler to be "dirty" and a threat to society based on their race and faith. To me, discriminating against individuals for choosing not to be vaccinated because their race has been proven to be at a higher risk to vaccine injury or to those whose personal faith/religion are such they view the body as a temple not to be filled with poison is no different than the atrocities we saw throughout history that many widely agree, now, was wrong.

If *we know* that the Supreme Court has declared vaccines unsafe and established a vaccine injury court to pay out *billions of taxpayer dollars* to those who are living proof of that fact, then how do we move in a direction that would allow individuals to be forced to vaccinate anyhow? Where is the liability? **Until our country comes to a place where manufacturers are held responsible and thereby forced to produce a product that does no harm, there is inherent risk. Where there is risk, there must be choice. Where there is choice, it must not be coerced.**

One individual's risk of contracting a disease is not of more importance or significance than another individual's risk of vaccine injury. Neither can be avoided and neither can be guaranteed which, again, is why *there must be choice and why that choice must not be coerced*.

As a mother, *of course* I would never wish for my child to be sick...ever! I want to protect her however I can. BUT - as I evaluate what we know about diseases and the risk involved with each I must also weigh out the risk of attempting to prevent those diseases through vaccination and make the decision that I feel is best for my family. It is no one else's responsibility to care for my child and my family - it is MY responsibility. I cannot oppress the lives of others for the sake of protecting my daughter's life by demanding they wear masks during flu season or that they not wear cologne with fragrances that we know have been linked to cancer. How is this any different?

If this bill is not supported, my fear is that my job may one day be at risk. As I stated, I am a single mother and my daughter relies on me for support. If I am forced to choose between feeding my family or taking a shot that is against my beliefs *and* maintains many potential risk factors that could likewise lead to injury or sickness (this cannot be disputed; every vaccine insert outlines *multiple* risks of harm), how do I choose? It is easy to

brush off these concerns as someone who has been fortunate enough to be vaccinated and not experience injury...but what about the many others who were not so lucky?

Without a bill like HB 248, citizens of Ohio will be segregated, yet again, into a caste system of "haves" and "have nots" and at the end of the day, those who chose not to vaccinate will still choose not to do so (as they are most likely not choosing this path simply out of laziness or stubbornness, but a deeply held belief).

As a body of people who were elected to represent the welfare of *all* Ohioans, it is your job and responsibility to vote in a way that ensures our laws protect us all, even if you believe those who support this bill are in the minority. To be honest, this is the first time I have ever publicly spoken about this concern out of fear of retaliation in my work and relationships. That said, I believe that I am also a good example of the many other voices that agree with me but share those concerns and do not speak out. You have an obligation to protect our rights and freedoms, not to take them away.

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

Sincerely,

Danielle Page