

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 Rhea Eva Crofton, and I am a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) and more importantly I am a mother to three young children. Both of these roles have given me insight and experience that show me just how important a bill like HB248 is, and how much it is needed urgently in Ohio. The decision of whether to receive a vaccine against COVID-19 or any other disease is a deeply personal, multifaceted one, a choice that I strongly believe must remain just that – a choice, not a mandate. Eliminating vaccine passports and mandatory vaccinations will prevent the choice from being made due to coercion rather than consent.

As a CRNA, I provide anesthetics to patients undergoing any type of procedure or surgery. My training in anesthesia school included numerous courses on pharmacology, and I hold an in-depth knowledge of drug indications and contraindications. There is truly no medication that is “one size fits all”. For example, if a patient has severe cardiac disease, I would not administer Propofol, an extremely common anesthetic widely used for general anesthesia. If a patient has renal disease, I would not administer rocuronium, a paralytic that is also commonly used. Part of my job was to know the patient’s history well enough to choose the appropriate anesthetic agents, so that I could safely administer anesthesia without causing harm to the patient due to an underlying condition. Again, no medication is “one size fits all”. In fact, the only medications to my knowledge that are blanketly recommended for all individuals, with very few exceptions shy of anaphylactic allergy, are vaccines. While we do know that vaccines CAN and DO cause serious side effects, including death, we do not have a clear indication of what underlying condition makes an individual at higher risk for those complications. The idea of mandating vaccines then, or allowing vaccine passports to be used in order for an individual to function in society, violates the individual’s right to make their own risk/benefit analysis of a medication that inherently carries a possibility of harm, and to choose to receive it or not accordingly. This is coercion, not consent, and I do not believe it is the place of the government, or a school, or a store, or a transportation company, or anyone else but the individual person to decide if the benefit of the medication outweighs the risk of harm.

As a mother, I have further concern regarding mandating any vaccines. After the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act was signed into law in 1986, pharmaceutical companies hold zero liability for any injury or death that occurs as the result of a vaccine. If mandates and vaccine passports exist in Ohio, the companies, businesses, schools, etc. requiring the vaccines will also hold no liability. In fact, the only person who holds any liability or accountability for injury or death from a vaccine is the one receiving it. If my child were injured or died from a vaccine, I would be the one grieving this massive loss on a daily, minute by minute basis. I should absolutely be the one to decide then if the risk for harm to my precious children, or to myself, is worth the associated risk. I, and all Ohioans and Americans, should make that decision from an informed place, after consultation with a trusted medical professional, assessing the risks for that individual person, and never on a blanket recommendation.

I truly believe that vaccine passports and mandated vaccines are one of the biggest threats to our freedom that we will face in our lifetime. Regardless of someone's stance about vaccinations in general, the freedom to choose whether to vaccinate or not should be a liberty that all Americans support and fight to maintain. That is why I am in complete support of House Bill 248 and I believe it is paramount in ensuring the safety and liberty of all Ohioans.

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

Sincerely,
Rhea Eva Crofton, CRNA