

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.

Let me be very clear. I am not against vaccines. I gladly spent hours scouring for available locations to take my elderly father and drove him nearly an hour to a location where he could get the vaccine. As an octogenarian with severe COPD and a recent heart attack, he is extremely vulnerable and I was thrilled that he could be first in line.

There are eleven and a half million people in Ohio. There will be some who decline vaccines for medical or religious reasons. Without the protection that this bill provides, the notion of a vaccine passport will lead to a class system in Ohio where segregation and discrimination proliferate.

Allow me to give you an example. I work for a small company with a couple dozen very hardworking Ohioans. Not having this bill will negatively impact our employees. There are a number of young people in the organization who are working and studying in the electrician apprentice program. They are paid on an hourly basis for the hours that they work, and must have a minimum number of working hours to qualify for health insurance. If these vaccine passports are allowed to be used to determine where our employees are allowed to work, some may not be able to get enough hours to pay their bills, to get healthcare for their families, or to finish their apprenticeships and education.

These are not healthcare workers, but they are very vulnerable to discrimination.

If employers are not allowed to collect this information about their employees, there is no way for discrimination to occur. There is no true benefit to employers having this information.

Best regards,  
Chris Sipes