

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 Annie Uhlenhake, and I am a preschool intervention specialist and mother. I not only work with special needs students aged 3-6, but I also come home to the same age group. I support House Bill 248 because this bill will directly affect the future of not only my students, but my children. I have witnessed firsthand the negative side effects of the restrictions and mandates of this past year. This age range is the least susceptible to severe symptoms of CoVid-19. Yet, we are forcing special needs three-year-olds to “mask up.” I am supposed to be teaching kindness, empathy, emotions, discipline, and pragmatics, but without facial cues and yelling through our own mask while six feet away. The long-term emotional impact that we are enacting on our youth, in my opinion, will be more devastating to them than CoVid-19 will be. The suicide rate as well as the increasing number of children getting professional help from a therapist seem to back up my theory. ^{1, 2}

Furthermore, as a parent and teacher, I cannot fathom a government telling me what to feed my child. Currently, a “healthy” snack is provided in my classroom that I would never feed my own children. To say it is healthy is obscene. So why should the government be telling me what to inject into my child? This is a decision between my husband and myself, as well as my child and his/her healthcare provider. So many different aspects come into play, and it is definitely NOT a one size fits all. HB 248 is desperately needed to protect our children and our future.

I would like to draw special attention to specific part of House Bill 248, although I support the bill in its entirety.

- The transparency part of this amended bill supports notifying parents of available exemptions, which is currently in place. However, in my personal experience, parents are not aware of exemptions, and are often eluded to them. It is extremely important that parents are notified of their rights in order for their child(ren) to receive free appropriate public education.*
- Protect Vaccine Choice: Whenever there is a risk, there must be a choice. There are documented side effects to these injections. We must be allowed autonomy over our own body.*
- Provide Legal Recourse for Violations: When/if an employer chooses to go against this bill and threatens to require their employees to be injected (for a vaccine that isn't even FDA approved at this time; just EUA), they must then be met with appropriate legal ramifications. This bill supports that and, in turn, gives extra protection to employees.*

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

Sincerely,

Amie Uhlenhake

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm>
2. <https://www.inquirer.com/health/children-teenagers-psychiatry-psychology-covid-19-mental-health-insurance-20210202.html>