

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for House Bill 248.

No doubt you have already heard many arguments on both sides of this issue. I write to try to get to the heart of the matter. I have no personal story of adverse reactions to vaccines from my childhood, and have not been affected by efforts to require common vaccines for adults, such as the flu shot. But I support HB-248 because the debate around it exposes a key question that any society must face, over and over: who decides?

In the United States of America, the answer is, and always must be, the individual.

Despite what the myriad public health officials, physicians' associations, hospital administrators, and government agents may argue, it is the *individual* who must have the right to reject or accept a course of action that directly affects them. The specter of the alternative is terrifying, and it lies beneath every argument against passage of this bill: the true desired outcome for these people is a nation of citizen-subjects who must line up to receive whatever injection or medicine the medical establishment prescribes. The only questions for government, in their view, are (1) how to get the largest proportion of the population to do so dutifully, and (2) what to do with those who resist. If you doubt me, witness the way citizens were treated during the recent pandemic, not only in this country, but beyond. Look at the way public health experts in this country regarded the measures taken in places like China, Europe, and Australia – one could detect an almost wistful yearning, hidden by varying degrees of subtlety, as they discussed which of these restrictions they could impose in the United States, and for how long. Look to our neighbor Canada, which is only now finally emerging from yet another expert-recommended, government-enforced curfew.

The worldview underlying the mentality of this bill's opponents is clear: We are in charge. We know best. You do what we say.

The subject of HB-248 is vaccines, but the question a legislator must face remains: who decides? I urge you to use your voice to speak loudly and clearly – that in this country and in the great state of Ohio, the answer is, and always will be: the individual. Tell the public health and medical establishment: you may inform us. You may educate us. But you will never coerce us.

Please support passage of House Bill 248.

Sincerely,  
Matthew Urbas