

**Proponent Testimony for House Bill 248**  
**Ohio House Health Committee**  
**June 3, 2021**

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.

I am Robert Vance, a small business owner, and the husband of a healthcare employee, and a father to two young children. I will keep my testimony short and sweet, briefly addressing this legislation as it pertains to those three topics – my business, my wife’s employment, and my children.

Whenever I approach an issue, I always tackle the easy stuff first to get it out of the way, so let me address being a small business owner first. To put it simply, businesses have no right to require an worker receive a pharmaceutical as a condition of employment, to discriminate against a worker who decides for themselves that they do not want to receive a particular vaccine, etc. As a business owner, part of my job is to protect all employees’ safety. I do not want the liability of a worker getting vaccinated, becoming injured, and then holding me liable for their work-related injury. Nor do I want the guilt of knowing a required vaccine injured a worker. Furthermore, as a business owner, it is my responsibility to ensure I provide a non-discriminatory workplace for workers - I do not want the liability from requiring an employee to receive a vaccine against their religious beliefs, or their personal health concerns. As a business owner, I’m also required to ensure that worker’s employment records remain private - I do not want the responsibility or liability of maintaining additional records for workers, much less healthcare records. I could go on, but to the point, as a business owner, I do not have the right to the inside of a worker’s body.

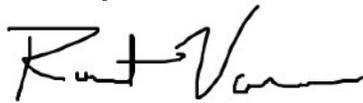
As it pertains to my wife. For years healthcare workers have been required by their employers to subscribe to a mandatory Influenza vaccination program against our wishes. My wife has been no exception. In fact, I personally know a number healthcare professionals who have made either religious or medical accommodation requests to their employers to opt out of the Flu shot – some of whom had requests denied and were subsequently quit their job in lieu of getting the vaccine; some of whom were terminated from their employment for refusing the shot; and one of whom filed a lawsuit against their former employer and was awarded a settlement. Fortunately for my wife, for the past half a dozen years, although she has been required to receive the Influenza vaccine yearly, her employer has honored her request for a religious accommodation. And despite submitting the exact same request each prior year, two years ago she was cornered in a surprise Skype call with Employee Health and her employer’s legal counsel to ask her questions about religious beliefs, the sincerity of them, etc – Completely illegal, by the way. But discount that experience as poor judgement on her employer’s part, the rest of her experience hasn’t been free of harassment. Each year she is left waiting to see how her employer’s policy will change – typically mid-process, after her request is submitted. Each year she’s left waiting for her accommodation approval up until the final days preceding her employer’s vaccination deadline. Each year, after her accommodation has been approved, she has been required to wear a mask from the moment she enters the building to the moment she leaves the building for the entire “Flu season”. Each year she has patients ask her why she’s wearing that mask, and she has been instructed by her employer to lie to them and tell them that she’s just a germaphobe. Each year she goes the entire year healthy, free of illness, wearing her mask, keeping her opinions to herself, while her Flu vaccinated co-workers came to work visibly sick – running noses, coughing, etc. But you know, “science”, because they were vaccinated, they were safe; and because my wife was healthy, not ill, but unvaccinated, she was a “global threat”. The policies are nonsensical. And through Coronapocalypse, the policies didn’t become any more logical, any more “scientific”, in fact they have just become even more irrational, contrived, and discriminatory. Our healthcare industry has been unable to demonstrate that any of these work-relate policies have made any impact on patient care, yet they continue to perpetuate them, they continue not to analyze their effectiveness, they continue to implement these policies based on any motivation other than health and science. I will restate what I mentioned above... An employer does not have the right to the inside of a worker’s body.

I will conclude by raising concerns regarding my children. Why is it that the healthcare industry and our government promote vaccines and drugs, but not exercise and healthy eating? Shouldn't our healthcare professionals be advocating for legislation to require kids to partake in more physical education in childcare and schools. Shouldn't our healthcare professionals be advocating for legislation to require childcare providers and schools to provide healthier lunches? Our family feeds our children organic foods almost exclusively. We spend about a hundred bucks a week on organic fruits and vegetables. But I send my children to even one of the best preschools in Central Ohio, and they still get cheese balls for snack. Our kids have always had lots of outside play time, we have even begun enrolling them in athletics, like a seasonal running club. Yet schools have an hour of recess a day, physical education instruction one day a week. But our solution is to pump kids up with more pharmaceuticals. Our family stays home when we're sick, we don't send our kids to pre-school, we load up on vitamins, we get outside for fresh air and sunlight, we alter our food intake, and so on. Shouldn't our public health officials be promoting that kind of behavior in homes? Shouldn't our public health officials be advocating for employers to provide more flexibility for ill employees, or who have ill family members, so they can stay home and recover properly? But our solution is to pump kids up with more pharmaceuticals.

It's all nonsensical and just demonstrates how insincere health officials are being. If this isn't about actual health, what's it about? Why are these policies so important to the fifty insurance companies, hospitals, health associations, and unions who have come out against HB248? Clearly they aren't concerned about actual health, like I mentioned, they don't make actual health their primary focus. Spoiler alert, it's about control, power, and money.

I strongly encourage you to vote in favor of Ohio House Bill 248 to codify Ohioans' right to maintain sole direction in their healthcare decisions and reaffirm Ohioans' right to healthcare privacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Nelson Vance". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "V".

Robert Nelson Vance