

To the members of the House Health Committee,

My name is Thomas Aviles, and I am a pediatric resident physician at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. I am writing to urge you to vote against House Bill 248-11. This bill nominally aims to prevent discrimination against those who wish not to vaccinate themselves and their children. However, in reality, this bill would create discrimination against those in our communities with less access to resources- namely those with scant access to transportation and healthcare, and children, who are unable to vote or advocate for themselves and are thus reliant on responsible adults to protect their best interests.

Should HB248-11 pass, young children who are too young to be vaccinated or whose families lack the resources necessary to bring them to doctor's visits will bear the brunt of the disease burden brought on by an increased number of unvaccinated individuals in the community. This will disproportionately affect children of color and low-income families, further worsening an already large gap in health outcomes for people of color in this country.

Furthermore, by not mandating vaccinations for children to participate in school activities, many more children will go for years without pediatrician visits at which myself and my colleagues in the community routinely detect major health issues needing specialized medical attention. We see children daily in our clinic who present for well child care only because they need forms filled out for school. These visits represents a significant opportunity for us to positively affect health outcomes, and this bill would all but eliminate those visits.

All told, this bill will create, rather than prevent, discrimination against members of our community when it comes to vaccination, which has been proven time and again to be safe and effective. I urge you to stand up for the health and well-being of the children of Ohio and vote to reject HB248-11.

Sincerely,
Thomas Aviles, MD