

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

My name is Kylee Bogner. I am currently a stay-at-home mom of two children. I have obtained a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry as my highest degree. There are numerous reasons I oppose House Bill 248.

Unvaccinated people are already protected under the law for medical and religious reasons under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, respectively. A business must make appropriate accommodations for these people. House Bill 248 would strip a business' ability to enforce these accommodations on a person such as mask usage or segregation from the public. Also, unvaccinated children are already permitted to go to school in Ohio. There is no threat to their ability to gain an education.

My rights to protect my children are going to be taken away. House Bill 248 states that this extends to individuals, not just businesses or government agencies. This means I cannot require a babysitter to be vaccinated. I am not allowed to be concerned for the health of my family.

House Bill 248 extends to schools, child day-care centers, nursing homes, residential care facilities, and health care providers (including hospitals.) These places are filled with vulnerable populations. Hospitals, alone, contain premature babies, chemotherapy patients, and immunocompromised individuals, as examples. House Bill 248 would make it acceptable for unvaccinated healthcare workers to be around these fragile people. On top of that, hospitals would not be allowed to force the unvaccinated individual to wear a mask or take any other precautions to lessen the possible infection risk. It sickens me to think of a premature baby possibly getting measles, whooping cough, or influenza from an unvaccinated healthcare worker. We need to protect the most vulnerable members of our society. The government cannot force a business' hands into allowing an unvaccinated person to threaten the health and safety of its members.

Also, it seems that people are mainly concerned about the possibility of businesses requiring the Covid-19 vaccines. If that is true, why is this bill covering all vaccinations? Vaccines that have been proven to be safe and effective. Unvaccinated people have lived in our society without repercussions for years. If the issue truly is the Covid-19 vaccines, why not make the bill about the Covid-19 vaccines while they are under Emergency Use Authorization? Eventually, the Covid-19 vaccines will be FDA approved and this erroneous bill will still be in place for no valid reason. That would allow businesses, hospitals, and families to protect the health of their members while maintaining the medical freedom of individuals. Also, please allow businesses to make appropriate accommodations for these unvaccinated individuals. The goal is to continue the downward trend of Covid-19 cases.

I have seen people complain about HIPAA violations when confronted with the idea of a business asking about vaccination status. The purpose of HIPAA is to prevent healthcare providers and health insurance companies from sharing health data. An individual is free to share that health data albeit there might be consequences for not sharing. There are no HIPAA violations happening. I have gone to the grocery store without a mask and employees did not ask me for my vaccination status. I do not believe that a business would jeopardize patronage by interrogating customers on vaccination status. If a business would choose to ask about vaccination status, they should be free to do so. A business should have the right to take precautions in mitigating disease spread.

Many people have asked why vaccinated individuals, such as myself, are concerned about unvaccinated individuals. It is true that my children and I are protected by vaccinations but that is not true for every person. I have read numerous accounts from parents who are immunocompromised or have children who are immunocompromised. These parents are afraid to go outside of their homes because of the current low Covid-19 vaccination rates. This bill would make everywhere unsafe for them forever. These families should not be living in fear of getting sick from vaccine preventable diseases. I am being an advocate for these families. Also, I do not know the future and my family may become part of this vulnerable population.

Historically, we have chosen policies that promote the public's safety and health over individual freedoms in the past. Some examples are prohibiting public smoking, seat belt usage in cars, proper child restraints in cars and drunk driving. I am not suggesting we fine unvaccinated individuals. That would be extreme. What makes these laws acceptable to people but our current vaccine laws are not? As stated before, unvaccinated individuals have protections under the law. If this bill should pass, then these laws should be scrutinized as freedom restricting, as well.

Finally, I urge you to vote "NO" for House Bill 248. It would be bad for public health and violates the rights of businesses and individuals.

Thank you, once again, for this opportunity to provide testimony on the opposition of House Bill 248.

Sincerely,

Kylee Bogner