

Chairman Lipps, vice chair Holmes, ranking member Russo, and members of the house health committee thank you for the opportunity to discuss my opposition to bill HB 248-11.

My name is Carlos Casillas and I am an internal medicine and pediatric physician at Cincinnati Children's hospital. Through my clinical experience with both children and adults, I have seen numerous hospitalizations due to illnesses such as liver failure from hepatitis A, ICU stays requiring mechanical ventilation due to influenza, and meningitis due to Haemophilus Influenzae. These are all illnesses that have vaccinations, proven to not only limit the clinic severity from these illnesses, in many cases, it has eliminated them all together. More recently, I have seen the devastation of COVID in adults of all ages, and the sequelae of increased inflammation as a result of a prior COVID infection with Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in children.

HB-248 has been discussed in a way to prevent mandatory vaccinations of the COVID vaccine, however, passing of such legislation would apply to ALL immunizations. The bill states that it will limit discrimination and allow greater individual freedoms, but the law is already written in a way that allows for "philosophical exemption".

These regulations have been in place to ensure that the wellbeing of the public is maintained. In addition to the benefits that are received in ensuring appropriate vaccination, these regulations also have the added benefit of ensuring timely primary care for children. This bill sets a dangerous precedent that puts those in our community, at greatest risk, children. The science has been very clear regarding the benefits of such measures, and the countless lives saved as a result. However, we know that without these safeguards, we are bound to repeat history. I urge you as a pediatrician and an advocate for children, please consider the facts when reviewing the information being presented.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,

Carlos A. Casillas, MD, MPH