

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the House Health Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Ruth Ann Farthing. I am a Registered Nurse and a Licensed School Nurse. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 248, the anti vaccination bill.

I consider myself and my family blessed that we live at this time when vaccines are available to prevent diseases that killed people in infancy and childhood a generation ago. I am grateful for the scientists who developed the vaccines and their interest in saving lives. I am grateful that there are records that my children's school and healthcare provider kept so we could make sure they kept up with their immunization schedule.

As a School Nurse, I know the importance of vaccinating children and adults against vaccine-preventable diseases. Most recently, I and my family were able to get vaccinated against Covid-19. This allowed us to be able to work and for schools to open up to in person learning. If I get exposed to a person who tests positive for Covid-19, I am unlikely to get seriously ill because I have been vaccinated. It is not necessary for me to quarantine after an exposure at school as long as I have no symptoms of Covid-19. "A growing body of evidence indicates that people fully vaccinated with an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna) are less likely to have asymptomatic infection or to transmit SARS-CoV-2 to others." (CDC-Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination Updated May 27, 2021)

HB 248 would ban schools, and others from requiring or even incentivizing vaccines. The bill would prohibit the school from asking parents for their child's immunization record. This bill would make it difficult for school nurses to monitor disease outbreaks. People getting vaccinated and having a record of the vaccination are important public health measures to protect the health of each student and the community.

This bill is unnecessary for the "freedom" of not vaccinating. There are already protections in place in Ohio's laws that allow for individuals to decline vaccinations for medical, religious, and reasons of conscience. HB 248, if passed, has the ability to reverse decades of immunity from life-threatening, but vaccine-preventable diseases.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote **NO** on this *dangerous* bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Ruth Ann Farthing