

To Chairman Lipps and members of the House Health Committee:

My name is Jennifer Hardie, MD. I have been a pediatrician since 1996, and I am currently the medical director of the Fairfield primary care site for Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. In my 25 years practicing pediatrics, science has brought us miraculous advances in health care, so that children who would have died of diseases such as AIDS or cystic fibrosis when I was in training can now look forward to living long and healthy lives.

Now, however, the lives of Ohio's children face a new risk, a risk not from an emerging disease but from HB 248.

Vaccines are one of the greatest scientific achievements of human history. A century ago, in 1920, there were 7575 deaths from measles and 13,170 from diphtheria. In 1999, not one child died of measles, diphtheria, smallpox, or polio. I have personally treated children born before immunization was available for meningitis who were left blind, deaf, or unable to walk or talk; in the past 20 years I have not seen a single patient suffer the devastating effects of these diseases. Unfortunately, several previously vanquished diseases are now on the rise due to parents being tragically misinformed about vaccines, especially measles. Aside from the devastating potential consequences to children's health, the costs of medical care for children affected by these diseases will increase the burden on Ohio's taxpayers.

Ohio's children deserve the protection of strong immunization laws. These diseases frequently strike infants who are too young to have gained immunity through completing their immunizations, so the only way to ensure that all children are safe and healthy is to require that all children be vaccinated. The scientific data overwhelmingly shows that vaccines are safe. Self-promoting charlatans may come before the legislature and claim that vaccines communicate with 5G towers; they may also claim to have received this information from aliens in a purple spaceship, but this does not make either claim true. There is no vaccine "controversy"—vaccines are safe and effective and every scientific study ever done backs this up. Ohio citizens who choose to disregard scientific fact have the right to take chances with their own lives. They do not have the right to take chances with the lives of Ohio's children.

I ask you to treat HB248 with the respectful consideration it deserves, which is none. Ohio faces real challenges that need your attention. Please do not waste time on this. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hardie, MD