

Hello, my name is Alyssa Lambrecht and I am a medical student at Ohio University. I grew up in Oregon, a small town near Toledo, OH. Growing up I always knew I wanted to become a physician. My passion for helping others and pursuing higher education stemmed from having two educators as parents. My mom and dad are both high school teachers which inspired me to pursue a career where I can make a difference in others' lives. Their ability to help their students was severely hindered by the pandemic and having to work virtually. Once they were able to go back to school, I was worried for them because students were not vaccinated, and they were forced to be around hundreds of people during the school day. To make matters worse, my dad cares for my grandpa who had a quadruple bypass surgery last August. Since my grandmother's passing, my dad's role in his father's life has been vital. Vaccinations have allowed families like mine to reconnect and care for those who need it most. I am thankful for the people who voluntarily received the vaccine in order for us all to be more protected against covid 19. So, I am here today to speak against Bill 248 because employers, schools, colleges, and other entities should be allowed to require vaccinations in order to keep the community safe from vaccine preventable illnesses.

I ask that you remember that this bill is not only about the covid 19 vaccine. This bill would harm the work of decades of public health initiatives to limit the impact of several serious diseases. For example, between 2000 and 2016, approximately 20 million children were saved due to the measles vaccine. In 2014, unvaccinated children spread measles to over 50 people at a Disney Park. Measles--which is a vaccine-preventable disease--is highly contagious and can lead to serious illness and open the door to larger outbreaks. This is just one example of how a vaccine preventable disease can spread due to unvaccinated people ⁽²⁾.

Vaccines can also reduce healthcare costs. For every \$1 spent on childhood vaccination programs, the country saves about \$11 ⁽³⁾. If saving lives isn't persuasive enough, maybe saving money will be.

Patient autonomy is an essential principle in healthcare. I believe that people have the right to direct their own health care choices, the problem is that these choices also impact others. If someone chooses not to be vaccinated, they are putting others' lives at risk. When the community benefits from vaccinations, legislatures have a public health duty to allow institutions to require them.

As a student with two auto-immune conditions who takes an immunosuppressive medication I would hope my neighbors and classmates would choose to receive scientifically proven vaccines in order to protect me and others with medical conditions. To protect people like me, I plead with you, our state legislature, to show leadership on this issue instead of creating barriers. I am grateful for the development of safe vaccines and how they have made our communities healthier places to live. This bill would slow and reverse our progress over the past century and hinder our efforts to fight communicable diseases in the years to come. Please consider the impact this bill would have on our children, teachers, and immunocompromised Ohioans like me. Thank you.

1. <https://vaccinateyourfamily.org/questions-about-vaccines/outbreaks-of-vaccine-preventable-diseases/>

2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5489284/>

3. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/pubs/methods/index.html>