

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

I appreciate the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on House Bill 248.

Not only does HB 248 prevent mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations, it would also apply to all other vaccinations that are given. Vaccines are one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century and have helped contribute to the significant increase in life expectancy in the United States. All previous vaccines have been rooted in science and have been largely accepted by the general population. The COVID-19 vaccine is also rooted in science and parts of the vaccine have been in development for over 15 years. Why is it that this particular vaccine has caused such an uproar compared to previous vaccines? We need to stop focusing on the political divide that has somehow made this vaccine, and this disease in general, so polarizing. We need to get back to evidence-based science and listening to those who are experts in their fields, not those who blatantly spread such obvious misinformation.

Vaccines keep us healthy, help us live longer, protect the young, the old, the immunocompromised, and many others. I am a primary care physician who routinely administers vaccines to my patients who range anywhere from 2-3 days of age all the way up to 90+ years old. I love that I am able to provide this protect to my patients in order to keep them and their communities healthy. Vaccines are in part to protect the person that gets the vaccine, yes, but they are also part of protecting the general public and those patients that are unable to receive vaccinations due to certain medical conditions, medications they may be receiving, true anaphylactic reactions to vaccine components, etc.

HB 248 has the potential to cause a serious detriment to the advances that have been made to our population's life expectancy and general health over the last 100+ years. Have you seen an infant, just a few months old, who was diagnosed with whopping cough? My guess is you, along with the majority of people, have not. Unfortunately, I have. I watched as these parents just stood over their baby lying in a crib struggling to breathe, not being able to do anything except hope that their baby would be alright. Have you seen diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, or polio? Neither have I; and it is because of almost universal vaccinations that this is the case. I fear that I will start seeing patients with measles, mumps, rubella, in my office because of the repercussions of HB 248. As a young physician who has never been exposed to patients with these diseases, I fear that if I do have a patient with one of these illnesses in my office that I will not recognize it and it will put more of my patients at risk. For example, I have pregnant women in my office regularly. If they are exposed to measles, mumps, rubella, or varicella, this can have a detrimental effect on the fetus they are carrying including death.

I ask that we stop listening to sensationalized internet voices and get back to listening to those who are experts in their field. As a family medicine physician who practices evidence-based medicine, I can expertly attest that HB 248 has the potential to lead to significant public health crises and set our medical advances back several decades.