

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

I am Dr. Mary Ramey, a very concerned citizen: mother, grandmother, retired as a clinical psychologist, advocate for my fellow Ohioans.

There are so many reasons to be strongly opposed to House Bill 248. These are the most critically important:

1. It strips the rights of incorporated businesses, which are 'persons' under federal and Ohio law, to conduct themselves according to their perceived best interests. As such, it is an unwarranted intrusion into their rights, which is what this bill purports to prevent.
2. It violates the right of government agencies to carry out their duty to promote the general welfare, which is established in the preamble to the United States Constitution. If the duty to protect Ohio citizens is weakened, what is to prevent its authority to require other public health measures from being eroded: why should my server or cook at the restaurant I am patronizing be required to wash his/her hands after using the restroom? Sure, E Coli can be deadly, but it isn't always, and personal hygiene is obviously a personal decision. No shirt, no shoes, no service? On what grounds could this be defended, if no public entity has the right to request, much less require, behavior concerning a health issue?
3. If the intent of this bill is to assert that government has no right to insert itself into a private health decision, as its supporters have claimed in the media, Ohio is opening a giant loophole for laws banning abortion procedures to be challenged, likely successfully. Either the government has the right to intervene to safeguard vulnerable persons – and every one of us is vulnerable to this novel disease as well as many others – even at the expense of curtailing some others' expectations of privacy, or it does not.

I do not wish to have tax dollars frittered away in defending the lawsuits which are sure to come if this bill is enacted. This poor public policy will be costly in needless suffering as well as finances. If proponents wish to target only a vaccination registry for this current pandemic, they must withdraw this poorly written, overly broad bill and try again.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you for the opportunity to make my objections known.