

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony. My name is Michael Ross. I am a retired educator (high school biology and chemistry teacher and school administrator). **I am strongly opposed to HB 248, the anti-vaccination bill.**

During this unprecedented COVID-19 epidemic, does anyone NOT want to be protected against such a lethal virus? Our nation's death toll is approaching 600,000 as I write this testimony. We are so fortunate to have effective science, technological know-how, and millions of dollars of resources, and we now have several effective vaccines to minimize individual infection and population contagion.

Why do I oppose HB 248?

- (1) State laws already exist to allow certain exemptions of those not desiring to take the COVID-19 vaccine or other vaccinations.
- (2) From a personal standpoint, I have received both doses of the Moderna vaccine, yet because I suffer from an auto-immune disease; it is unknown as to whether I can produce sufficient antibodies to protect myself from contracting COVID as a result of exposure to the general population. There are thousands of others in Ohio who are immune-compromised as well.
- (3) I have loved ones: friends, neighbors, and family members who currently reside in nursing homes (and a few have succumbed to the corona virus this past year). Why would I not want my loved ones to reside in a nursing home with a high staff and patient vaccination rate? Nursing home owners/operators who are unable to require vaccinations and to publicize or market their high vaccination rates would be placed at a disadvantage as a result of HB 248. Aside from threatening public health, this proposed legislation is bad for business, too.

- (4) As an educator, I fail to see the reasoning behind limiting the vaccination rate in a schoolhouse full of children. Why would we want to limit the protection for all children, and increase the statistical probability of unwanted infection rates? (Yes, current laws allow for exemption from school vaccination requirements.)
- (5) Ohio must use a variety of strategies to promote vaccination rates. HB 248 thwarts almost all efforts to maximize vaccination for more effectively protecting all of us. I sincerely agree with a recently released statement from health professionals and business leaders: **“At its core, this proposal would destroy our current public health framework that prevents outbreaks of potentially lethal diseases, threaten the stability of our economy as it recovers from a devastating pandemic, and jeopardize the way we live, learn, work and celebrate life.”**