

The Ohio House of Representatives
House Health Committee
Representative Scott Lipps, Chair

HB248 (Vaccine Choice HB248 (Vaccine Choice and Anti-Discrimination Act))
Opponent Testimony
June 8, 2021

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chairman Homes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the Ohio House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in opposition to House Bill 248. On behalf of Dayton Children's Hospital Center for Community Health and Advocacy, I'm gravely concerned about HB 248 -11 and the message it sends about the value our state places on children. Immunizing children protects the health of our community, especially those who cannot be immunized including children who are very young and those who cannot receive vaccines for medical reasons. A consistent approach to childhood vaccinations and a way to track those vaccinations is critical to public health and is good public policy.

As a public health expert, child advocate and children's hospital employee, I'm troubled that the investments our country and state have made in public health and preventive care will be reversed, and frankly wasted, if HB 248 -11 is passed. Vaccine-preventable diseases have a costly impact, resulting in doctor's visits, hospitalizations, and premature deaths. Sick children miss school and can also cause parents to lose time from work, thus impacting academic and economic productivity. Ohio's vaccination rates are already among the lowest in the US, leading to a multitude of poor health outcomes for children. HB 248-11 would only contribute to poorer health while creating a significant financial impact to families and businesses.

According to the National Institute for Children's Health Quality, while vaccinations help ensure that children will be less likely to be affected by preventable conditions, they have also been a tool in closing health disparities. Ohio has many health disparities, particularly among low-income families and children. Improving immunization rates is key to decreasing health disparities.

Healthy People 2030 has several vaccination objectives including reducing the proportion of children who get no recommended vaccinations by age 2. As other states are moving towards improving public health and meeting the Healthy People 2030 goals, bills such as HB248-11 will move Ohio backward, putting our state at a disadvantage economically among our peers.

As a working mother who votes, pays taxes and participates in my community, I'm concerned that the protections against disease my children had in their day care and have currently in their schools will be reversed because of this legislation. In addition, the bill will blind public health from understanding the nature of preventable disease by removing the ability for Ohio's public health system to track information critical to preventing outbreaks of contagious diseases, including measles, mumps, hepatitis and meningitis.

HB248-11 reverses a critical responsibility the state has – to protect its citizens and I strongly oppose it's passing.

Respectfully submitted,



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