

I feel qualified to speak to this issue due to my education and career dedicated to public health. I am retired from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. I had a 34 year career with CDC conducting public health research. I conducted research with Viral Special Pathogen Branch of CDC as well as other public health agencies around the world including WHO. I have presented public health issues to the United Nations.

Basic Public Health Practice demonstrates the importance and effectiveness of universal vaccination programs. I grew up in a time where polio victims were placed "iron lungs" to survive, where childhood diseases such as rubella (caused pregnancy loss or birth defects in pregnant women), mumps (caused infertile in adolescents), chicken pox (caused encephalitis, cerebellar ataxia), whooping cough etc. We all had our small pox vaccination scars -- NOT small pox!

Strong universal vaccination programs have eradicated small pox "off the face the earth"! Universal vaccination programs have provided "herd immunity" for many serious childhood diseases. The great success of the COVID vaccinations has allowed us to rapidly return toward normal. The recorded COVID deaths are now from the unvaccinated.

The great success of universal vaccination programs is an obvious indicator that we need to strengthen these programs. The rhetoric being used for the justification of this bill is unsubstantiated, uneducated, and political.

Our country has successfully used mass vaccination for good of all and is a National Security Issue. Our forefathers supported universal vaccinations. On the January 6, 1777, George Washington issued an order to inoculate all of the soldiers that came through Philadelphia. On February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1777, Washington informed Congress that was establishing a policy of mass inoculation. Washington conducted the first mass inoculation of an army at the height of a war. While the disease raged on across there country, there were only isolated infections among Continental soldiers during the southern campaign, with no regiments being incapacitated.

Universal vaccination policies create a herd immunity that protects those in our community that are medically fragile. There is nothing harder than watching your child struggle with serious illness and the unthinkable, a child's death. Universal vaccination have saved countless lives of both children and adults.

Universal vaccinations are a public health necessity and saves lives, reduces pain, suffering, and disabilities. There is a process for a parent to exempt their child from vaccinations. The process isn't frivolous to insure it id necessary but is not overburdensome.

Ohio is a community where we care about our fellow citizens' safety and wellbeing. Public Health practices are aimed at this goal. **Please vote against House Bill 248.**