

To: Members of the Ohio House Health Committee

Re: HB 248-11

Dear Ohio House Health Committee,

As a health care worker (Registered Nurse) and also a concerned citizen and parent, I am gravely concerned by HB 248-11, legislation that puts ALL Ohioans at risk. 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.

The legislature has heard that this bill's purpose is to prevent the COVID-19 vaccine from becoming mandatory, but HB 248-11 applies to ALL immunizations, including childhood vaccines. If passed, this legislation has the potential to reverse decades of immunity from life-threatening, but vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, mumps, hepatitis, meningitis and polio. In fact, the words "COVID-19" or "coronavirus" are not found anywhere in the bill.

This legislation would also take away the rights of individuals who have businesses in Ohio to implement important safety measures meant to protect their employees, clients, and others. Many businesses have seen enormous fallout as a result of the pandemic and are working to rebuild and move forward. Business owners should each retain the right to carefully evaluate the unique circumstances they face and make their own determinations about what is best for keeping the workplace healthy and their overall recovery. As current Ohio law allows for school immunization exemptions to decline vaccinations for medical, religious, or reasons of conscience (known as the philosophical exemption), and most businesses allow for flexibility in regard to vaccinations, I question the need for HB 248-11. This overly broad proposal would further strip away accountability and compassion for our fellow Ohioans, and cause severe disruption to our state's health, economy, and way of life. It is my plea that HB 248-11 be rejected, to protect the vitality of Ohio's citizens and avoid disastrous consequences for the future of our state. We need to trust our government to help ensure safety of all of our citizens, not break down a system that already works to keep our citizens safe.

Thank you for your time,

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