



June 18, 2021

Chairman Scott Lipps
Ohio House of Representatives
Health Committee

Re: Opposition HB 248

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition to HB 248. I am a board-certified Allergist-Immunologist with over 20 years' experience treating patients and performing basic and translational scientific research on the immune system. I am also Professor and Chief of the division of Allergy and Immunology at Nationwide Children's Hospital and The Ohio State University Department of Pediatrics. HB 248 threatens the health of all Ohioans and, if enacted, would have a devastating impact. I most strongly encourage you to oppose HB 248.

Vaccines are one of the greatest medical success stories. Over the last 100 years immunizations against polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and meningitis amongst others have saved countless lives and reduced suffering. It is critical that we continue to require vaccination as a way to protect the public from these dangerous pathogens. You need look no further than the current SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic to see the great impact of vaccination. Currently, infection rates are falling, hospitalizations are decreasing, and the death rate is dropping – all of this because we have effective and extremely safe vaccines to prevent COVID-19.

In fact, the success of vaccines sometimes leads us to forget what life was like in their absence. We no longer suffer from polio, measles, mumps, and rubella epidemics because of the success of these vaccines. Making vaccines optional would lead to many forgoing these lifesaving therapies, and a resurgence of these dangerous infections. As a medical researcher who has published over 100 scientific articles, received several federal (NIH) research grants, and served on numerous federal (NIH and FDA) review panels, I can tell you that the vaccines used in the US (including for COVID-19) are safe – far safer than driving an automobile; the risk benefit ratio of vaccines is one of the most favorable of any intervention in modern medicine. But don't take my word for it – in 2014 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that childhood vaccines had prevented 322 million illnesses, 21 million hospitalizations, and 732,000 deaths over 20 years (<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p0424-immunization-program.html>). Vaccines have been very safe and very effective. Given the miraculous success of vaccines, why would we begin to reduce our use and enthusiasm for them now?

HB 248 will likely lead to a significant reduction in the number of children being vaccinated. A direct result of reduced vaccinations will be increased infections, illnesses, and death. As an elected official, you work to protect and support the citizens of Ohio. Vaccines have a long and exceptional record of doing just that. Please do not be distracted by those with various other agendas, who seek to discredit vaccines. HB 248 is a mistake and will only lead to increased misery and suffering for the children and adults of Ohio. I beg you not let this happen, please oppose HB 248.

Thank you for allowing me to comment on HB248.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mitchell H. Grayson", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

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