

HB 248: To Prohibit Required Vaccination Status
Opponent Testimony: Sandra Hans, M.D.
Ohio House Health Committee
June 15, 2021

I appreciate the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on House Bill 248. I am gravely concerned by this legislation, as it would significantly weaken the robust public health framework that protects us from the devastation of many vaccine-preventable diseases. HB 248 does much more than prevent mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations, as it would actually apply to ALL vaccinations. This bill would decimate our progress in public health in the past century and hinder our efforts to fight communicable diseases in the years to come. Passage of this Bill will place the health of Ohioans at great risk.

Vaccines save lives and prevent suffering. Thanks to vaccinations, we live in a safer, healthier place than our ancestors before us did. Vaccinations are truly one of public health's greatest success stories. Through continued scientific breakthroughs, we continue to improve the health of all of us. HB 248 is deeply troubling, as it would give more diseases (some far deadlier and more contagious than COVID-19) the opportunity to run rampant, generate exorbitant, avoidable health care expenses, and most importantly, cost us lives.

UNICEF reports an estimated 20 million children's lives worldwide were saved by measles vaccinations between 2000 and 2016. A recent World Health Organization publication (referenced in MMWR) followed the incidence of rubella in the European region from 2000-2019 and due to the use of rubella containing vaccines, the incidence decreased from 716.9/million to 0.7 /million. Global polio cases have rapidly declined by over 99.9% in just over 30 years due largely to vaccinations. Much of Dr Sabin's research on the oral polio vaccine was done at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Thanks to his work and the work of others, polio has been nearly eradicated. Many of us don't remember the devastation that polio inflicted upon children. Furthermore, small pox was eradicated due to vaccination efforts. Additionally, a study published earlier this year found that an estimated 69 million lives will be saved by vaccinations against 10 major pathogens between 2000 and 2030.

Vaccines are a direct contributor to economic gains, too. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that for every \$1 spent on childhood vaccination programs, our country saves about \$10.90 in health care costs, and that routine vaccination of children born between 1994 and 2018 has saved our country close to \$406 billion in medical costs and \$1.88 trillion in total society costs. Studies by CDC researchers have found that in a typical flu season, influenza imposes an estimated \$87.1 billion economic burden on the country, and health care facilities requiring flu vaccinations among their employees can reduce patients' risk of contracting influenza or influenza-like illness by 42%. Furthermore, population data shows that areas with higher COVID-19 vaccination administration are seeing dramatic decrease in cases. CDC has updated data on this for reference. Let's not lose sight of the fact that we have lost nearly 600,000 Americans to COVID-19, including 20,000 Ohioans. COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be safe and efficacious thanks to the unprecedented efforts of our dedicated researchers. We should be encouraging vaccination, not discouraging it.

Through vaccinations we not only provide critical protection for infants, young children, and immunocompromised individuals, but we keep ourselves, our families, and our neighbors safe. We have come to take the success of vaccinations for granted as we all benefit from their protection every single

day. Because of vaccines, we live our daily lives largely safe from many diseases that once spread through the population unchecked. We cannot afford to risk weakening that protection with HB 248. Vaccinations do not take away our freedoms; vaccinations *give* us freedom.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns, and once again, I urge the committee to reject HB 248 to keep Ohioans safe and avoid dangerous consequences for our state.