

June 16, 2021

Dear Chairman Lipps and Ohio House Representative Health Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to give written testimony in opposition to HB 248, Prohibit Discrimination Based on Vaccination Status.

In Ohio if you are to have a medical procedure and your doctor or nurse or any other health care worker is not vaccinated or had not received their flu shot, they are to wear a surgical mask to protect the patient from contacting a devastating disease or virus.

Our daughter Mei has had over 11 surgeries and procedures over the years due to her cleft lip and palate. Each time we enter the hospital we understand that you are taking a risk of an exposure to a virus or infection that are common in hospitals. But at least we know that the hospitals here in Ohio take precautions to decrease the exposure to these threatening viruses. I never felt as though I needed to ask my daughter's doctors, nurses or the person taking her to the operating room if they had all their vaccines or flu shot, let alone all the people she comes in contact with that I never see: the OR staff, post-op staff and so on. It should not be a concern to a parent when they have other pressing matters on their mind. But, if this bill is passed, this could be just as important to their health as the pending surgery. It saddens me that by enacting this bill we are taking the lives of patients who may be more vulnerable to these diseases and putting them in harm's way. I mention my daughter, but I am also concerned about all the cancer patients, diabetic patients, transplant patients, etc. You will risk causing harm to so many people with this piece of legislation.

Mei will be heading to college a year from now. She will have all her vaccines up to date. I am happy that she will be going to college with others whose vaccines are up to date. She has had the meningitis vaccine as well as the HPV vaccine, among others. I want to protect her from a devastating cancer that can occur in the prime of her life.

I hope that the committee will not pass HB 248 out of committee.

Sincerely,

Kathy Harter