



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Department of Internal Medicine
Division of Hospital Medicine

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<http://internalmedicine.osu.edu/hospitalmedicine/>

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

My name is Allison Heacock MD. I am an internal medicine and pediatrics hospitalist physician who cares for inpatients at Nationwide Children's Hospital and Ohio State University Medical Center. I have been in practice for approximately 10 years.

I am writing to you to voice my strong opposition to Ohio House Bill 248. Vaccines are probably the one medical achievement that has done the most to help the health of the entire population. There is a reason we do not see diseases like polio, measles, rubella among others any more in Ohio. Vaccines, as you know, are only effective as long as we have enough of the population who are vaccinated. There are many who cannot get vaccines and we have little way to protect them and this bill directly harms them too (such as children who are not yet fully vaccinated, older individuals, those on immune-suppressing medications and those with cancer among others).

This bill is about choice and perceived freedom but there are already protections in place in our state's laws that allow for individuals to decline vaccines for themselves or their children for religious reasons, medical reasons or reasons of conscience. HB248 seems to be based on fear and misinformation and truly hinders the ability of hospitals, long-term-care facilities and schools to protect the most vulnerable citizens from many a life threatening and contagious infectious diseases. Combining my religious and professional views, it is my belief that vaccines are the way we love our neighbor by using the science that God afforded us in a biblical way. I have seen children devastated by meningitis secondary to lack of vaccination and this will only increase by passing of this bill.

Though HB248 is being billed as a "medical freedom bill", it denies our employers and businesses the freedom to protect their workers and customers from diseases that we know are preventable. Health care workers may have to choose between their career and protecting immunocompromised family members. HB 248, if passed has the ability to reverse decades of immunity from life-threatening but preventable disease and I urge you to vote against this bill.



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Sincerely,

Allison Heacock MD

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