

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in opposition to **House Bill 248**. My name is Sabrina Mackey-Alfonso, and I am an Ohio State University MD/PhD Student.

I am coming to you as a medical student who is dedicating my life to heal patients and to do no harm. Immunizations play a *critical* role in this. As representatives, you took this position to help the people you represent. This bill would harm Ohioans and people in this country in general.

We have a rising tide of anti-vaxxers in the country. This bill will only encourage this wave. Getting vaccines do not only help the people who get vaccinated, but those in the country with weakened immune systems. Getting a vaccine is NOT just for you, but to protect the people around you. By stamping out the viruses through mass vaccination efforts, it disallows the virus to mutate and create worldwide pandemics like the one we are in the middle of now. There are scary mutations coming out of nearby countries like South America. These mutations are more likely to happen the longer this virus persists. Our main weapon to stop further deaths is to get vaccinated.

House Bill 248 would dramatically expand vaccine exemptions in general, not only for COVID-19. It would expand it for children entering school or a state licensed childcare center. Additionally, the bill places new restrictions on hospitals and businesses that would place patients, customers, and employees at risk. Finally, in addition to a significant expansion of vaccine exemptions, the bill also prohibits hospitals and other healthcare facilities from taking any steps to control the spread of infectious disease. **Perhaps that is why the healthcare and business community here in Ohio is united in its opposition to this legislation.**

As for the argument for choice, I would never coerce or force a patient to undergo a medical procedure or to receive an immunization. Proponents of House Bill 248 have consistently alleged that patients are being forced to receive a vaccine. This is not only inaccurate, but offensive to providers and future providers like me who care deeply for our patients. Patient informed consent is critical, and I work every day to ensure the Ohioans I care for are informed about all aspects of their medical care.

It is important this committee understands that both medical consensus and public opinion strongly support immunization. Anti-vaccine activists have consistently tried to diminish confidence in vaccination and have made **baseless** accusations about the conduct of providers like me who care for Ohioans.

In closing, I beg you to not back this bill. Please consider the harm you will do to this country if you do. I hope you understand the complications **you** personally will cause for entirely preventable, scary diseases. You will go against decades of science and public health efforts. We, as physicians, cannot do our jobs with this bill in effect. Ohio's healthcare providers are deeply concerned about this legislation. We are the people you trust with the health of your family, and we are asking for you to make the right decision. On behalf of myself, my family, and my patients, I hope you will oppose this harmful legislation. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Best,
Sabrina Mackey-Alfonso