



MERCER COUNTY

HEALTH DISTRICT

Friday, June 11, 2021

To: Members of the Ohio House Health Committee

Re: HB 248-11

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing today to provide testimony in strong opposition to House Bill 248-11. While I understand the sponsors promote this bill as an effort to prevent the COVID-19 vaccine from becoming mandatory, in reality, this bill would prohibit the requirement of any childhood or adult immunizations by any entity in Ohio. Schools, health care facilities, and businesses could no longer require important vaccinations or even ask employees about their vaccination status.

Ohio law already allows parents to opt their children out of vaccination for medical or religious reasons or reasons of conscience in the school context. Additionally, most businesses have flexible vaccination policies. Ohio's citizens already have the freedom that this bill seeks in terms of routine immunizations, yet most of them vaccinate their children. Widespread vaccination has successfully rendered severe diseases like polio nearly non-existent for decades. This trend will reverse itself if we see a drastic drop in vaccination rates in Ohio. We have already seen a resurgence of measles and mumps in recent years. This resurgence is likely due to declining vaccination rates under the existing exemption framework.

As stated previously, Ohioans already have the freedom to opt out of routine vaccinations. Although House Bill 248-11 purports to be a freedom bill, I believe it goes so far as to unduly restrict the freedom of business owners and organization leaders who find it necessary to protect their employees and clientele by requiring certain vaccinations as a condition of employment eligibility. If the legislature feels that it must act to prohibit mandatory COVID-19 vaccination, then it should do that and only that. Allowing House Bill 248-11 to proceed in its current form is much further-reaching. It would deal a serious blow to Ohio's public health system and our ability to control the spread of severe communicable diseases.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this critical matter.

Respectfully,

Jason D. Menchhofer, R.S.
Administrator
Mercer County Health District