

HB 248: To Prohibit Required Vaccination Status
Opponent Testimony: [NAME]
Ohio House Health Committee
June 22, 2021

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

My name is Lynn Shaffer and I write in opposition to HB 248.

I agree with lines 182-184 where it states, "It is the policy of this state that the success of our state relies largely on the success of the businesses within the state,..." However, HB248 removes the flexibility that businesses need to thrive according to their circumstances. Due to the nature of their commerce, some businesses may need to protect their workers and/or customers from harm due to infectious diseases while for others this need may be less urgent. Furthermore, flexibility allows the market to determine which businesses thrive and which don't. It also would allow Ohioans to choose between businesses which establish vaccination requirements and those which do not.

HB248 appears to be concerned with preventing discrimination. Discrimination occurs when people are separated on an arbitrary basis. That is why discrimination based on sex, race or religion is illegal. Separating people on the basis of their vaccine status is not arbitrary. It is established knowledge that certain severe and life-threatening infectious illnesses are transmitted from person to person (e.g., through droplets). It is established knowledge that vaccines which are properly developed and manufactured (including those for protection against COVID-19) are safe and effective. It is established knowledge that there is no herd immunity without vaccination. A policy which requires vaccination or separates people on the basis of their vaccination status is not arbitrary and contributes to preventing diseases which harm Ohioans either physically or by disrupting important aspects of daily life such as school and work. As James Madison said, "The advancement of science and the diffusion of information [are] the best aliment to true liberty." [aliment = nourishment]

I also ask whether you feel Ohio should take steps to protect our more vulnerable citizens who cannot protect themselves from the health choices of others? Lines 208-210 state, "It is the policy of this state that the health choice and privacy of individuals are paramount and shall remain so under all circumstances..." If individual health choice takes precedence over all other considerations, this would appear to open the door to abolishing anti-drunk driving and pro-life laws. If a person likes to drink to excess and then drive, and possibly kill or injure another uninvolved person, do you consider that "their personal choice"? An unborn baby taxes a mother's health, sometimes markedly so. If she decides to protect her health by having an abortion, does her choice take precedence over all other considerations? You might say there are limits, but this bill abolishes limits. Some choices simply cannot be "personal."

For the safety of our community, I humbly urge you to reject HB 248.

Sincerely,
Lynn Shaffer