

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Agnes I. Martin, and I live in Jackson – in southeastern Ohio.

Leonard Pitts, a nationally syndicated columnist and 2004 Pulitzer Prize winner for commentary, writes that human beings may be too stupid to survive.

The biggest threats to our existence are difficult to understand and nearly impossible to solve when social media and Fox personalities spread misinformation.

People still deny that humans cause climate change. A retired school teacher said recently in my hometown newspaper that sea levels are not going to rise and that human activity and gas-fueled cars are nothing to worry about.

Another fact not to worry about, according to many in Congress, is the storming of our United States Capitol by insurrectionists intending to overturn the election of President Joe Biden. This in response to our former President being unable to accept that he lost.

More immediate in our daily lives, we need to face the fact that we are in a pandemic which would go away a lot faster if more people

would get vaccinated. Fewer people would die and the virus would not thrive and mutate in so many still living victims.

Also in my hometown, a City Councilman recently died of Covid 19, so far as we know, and he was not vaccinated. But there has been no public acknowledgment of either his cause of death or his vaccination status. In Jackson, which has about a 36% vaccination rate, those facts would be important for us to know – especially for the unvaccinated.

Do we face facts or are we too stupid to survive?

Please vote no on House Bill 248. It is dangerous and counter-productive. We need to make it easy to get vaccinated and hard to remain unvaccinated. This bill would take us backwards to before vaccinations. When I was a child in the 1950's, my schoolmates and I lined up at school, and we were vaccinated against polio right there. It seemed like a miracle not to worry about polio anymore. We can vaccinate against Covid 19 and other infectious diseases the same way.

Please do the right thing and vote no on this House Bill 248 as often as it is necessary to kill the bill.