

5071 McIntosh St.
Groveport, OH 43125
August 16, 2021

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

I want to thank you for the opportunity to be able to submit written proponent testimony in support of Ohio House Bill 248. I am a registered nurse, as well as a mother of six children and a concerned citizen who strives to make healthy decisions for myself and my family. I am thankful for the opportunity to have my voice heard. This is an important issue on which all opinions should be heard and considered.

I have been a registered nurse for over 18 years. Although I have not worked in healthcare for the last three years, I have experience working in multiple hospitals in two different states and have witnessed the evolution of healthcare through various transitions. During nursing school and in my training, I was taught that patient autonomy is paramount, and that patients should be encouraged, to whatever extent possible, to take personal responsibility for their own healthcare. As nurses, we are in a unique position to facilitate this, as studies continually show that nurses, as a profession, are among the most trusted members of the community. When procedures, drugs, or surgeries are recommended by physicians, the patient ultimately has the right to accept or decline the procedure, drug, or treatment, as he or she maintains autonomy over his or her own body, and this is as it should be. I have generally seen this concept respected in my years as a nurse. Over time, and taking some of my own health concerns into account, I have personally made more of an effort to live a healthy lifestyle, and at times this has included declining some vaccines, drugs, or procedures that were recommended to me by my physicians. I am very cognizant of what I allow into my body as my understanding of my health grows and I continue to learn. The same goes for my children. As a mother, I do my best to make the best decisions for them. I know them and their health history best. Some of my children have had complicated health issues, surgeries, and even reactions to vaccines, and this always causes me to research, re-evaluate and make the best decisions I can for them and their health. I can always choose a treatment or vaccine for myself or my child later, after spending time learning more about it, but once vaccines or certain treatments are administered, they cannot be undone. These are very personal decisions, and the decisions should be left up to the owners of the bodies themselves, and their parents.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented many new challenges for Ohio, as well as the United States and the world. Now that a vaccine is available, we have seen many Ohioans choosing to receive it, although many have not. I support each individual's right to choose what is right for themselves in this regard, and I oppose any legislation that would attempt to impose the vaccine on an individual against their will, or cause undue hardships to those who do not want to receive the vaccine. I support HB 248 because I believe that Ohioans should have ultimate authority over medical decisions related to their own healthcare and what goes into their bodies, as well as being able to maintain privacy surrounding these decisions. I believe that this is an extremely urgent matter to address, so that those who choose to decline the vaccine may be protected from facing discrimination of any kind.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to provide testimony on the need for and urgency of House Bill 248.

Sincerely,
Briana Manthei, RN, BSN
Groveport, Ohio