

Chairmen Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 248.

My name is Carrie Marshall and I am a Speech-Language Pathologist specializing in geriatric speech, communication and swallowing disorders. I have been employed in Long Term Care Rehabilitation and worked in nursing homes for my entire 14 year career. Without the passage of HB248, I will be forced to leave a career I am passionate about, a career for which I spent 6 years in college to attain a Master's Degree. I work hard to continue my education in the field each year and pay a lot to maintain my State license and national certification. I am a dedicated employee and caregiver and I love what I do. I support HB248 because making informed decisions about healthcare should be a right afforded to all persons. My employer, a contract therapy company that provides Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy services in several nursing homes in Ohio, has issued a mandate for all employees to take one of the three COVID-19 shots available under Emergency Use Authorization from the FDA or face termination of employment on September 10, 2021. Currently, there are potentially other positions to which I could apply at other companies in order to use my degree, however, I fear that if this bill is not passed, it will not be long before all healthcare institutions require this shot and I will be ineligible to work in my field unless I subject myself to an experimental medical intervention that I do not feel comfortable receiving. I know I am not alone in this concern. Many of my colleagues are facing the same fate if our rights to healthcare autonomy are not protected.

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

Sincerely,

Carrie Marshall