

Gabriela Hopler  
[gabriela.hopler@gmail.com](mailto:gabriela.hopler@gmail.com)  
August 13th, 2021

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

Hello, my name is Gaby Hopler, and I am a resident of the Pataskala/Blacklick area, where I live with my husband (and our two dogs). I have lived in Ohio for 15 years, graduated from Ohio State, and currently work for Denison University as an Employer Relations Specialist. I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 248 today.

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen, as I watch events unfold in our community and society and the way things are moving, and I want to urge you to support HB248. Whether someone is younger, in good health, or now has natural immunity - and is not at relative risk of COVID - OR if they are more at risk, have underlying conditions, or are older - and therefore the vaccine is more important for them - it should be THEIR decision to get vaccinated, and they should not be forced or coerced into doing it. (I do want to state that I am in favor of the vaccine (as a choice) for those older, more at risk, etc. - for example, my parents, who are vaccinated.)

For context, I am 29 years old. According to the most recent CDC data, there have been a total of 3,300 US COVID deaths in people aged 29 or younger. That averages to roughly 2,200 deaths/year. That means I am almost FIVE TIMES more likely to die in a car crash (10,500 car crash deaths in people aged 29 or younger in 2019). I understand some people are more at risk, but in their case, they should choose to be vaccinated and to use focused protection, but for most Americans, forcing the vaccine on them is not necessary. I can pull countless similar examples of how there are many things that pose much more of a risk to me and millions others like me, and forcing a vaccine is much too extreme of a measure to take.

On top of that, I am gravely concerned about the consequences of vaccine mandates (like the one soon to be enforced from my employer) from businesses, schools, jobs, etc. Not least of all, I am personally at risk of losing my job from being unvaccinated. I feel trapped between feeling forced into getting an injection I am not comfortable with, or losing my job and not being able to pay our mortgage, possibly losing our home, and being in a very dire situation. Also, with possible discrimination against unvaccinated people, being marked as vaxxed/unvaxxed, I do not know how others don't see this as an extremely dangerous precedence to set, and a slippery slope. In the future, if this is the new norm, what happens when some medical procedure comes out that even less of the population is OK with, but is forced? With this precedence set, and without bills like HB248 to protect us, I don't know what would prevent that.

Again, between the vaccine being unnecessary for large sections of the population, but also the extremely dangerous precedence of allowing hardworking Ohioans to be fired from their jobs, discriminated against, not allowed into stores, establishments, etc based on a private medical decision, I do not see a bright future in Ohio without HB248 passing. No amount of mandates will cause 100% vaccination, and even vaccinated people can get and pass COVID, so the only way we get through this is with focused protection, overall herd immunity both naturally for some

Gabriela Hoper  
[gabriela.hoper@gmail.com](mailto:gabriela.hoper@gmail.com)

August 13th, 2021

and by vaccination to others, and by not allowing fear to control the decisions made by those in charge. Therefore, I would urge you to see the necessity of HB248 and allow logic to prevail in this case.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Gabriela