

Chairman 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 Leah Yost and I am a wife, a mother, an office professional and have been an Ohio citizen all my life. The reason I support House Bill 248 is because I am a firm believer in medical freedom for all. My oldest son is autistic, he is now 23 years old. He is vaccine injured and I have carried around the guilt for that for many years. I didn't do enough of my own research and just went along with the medical professionals who thought they knew what was best. It seemed like the right thing to do, this was the price I paid for ignorance. This led to me researching more, advocating for my child in ways that most parents would think was a nightmare, knowing all of my son's legal rights, years of occupational therapy, speech therapy and many, many tears. Because of all that hard work and determination that it took all those years, my son became a success story. He was able to graduate high school at a fifth grade level and then went on to be an amazing powerlifter for Special Olympics Ohio, represented Ohio at the USA games in 2018, and even traveled to Abu Dhabi in 2019 for the World Games representing the United States. He dominated and came home with 4 gold medals, even out lifting the higher weight classes. He works a part time job and is so full of joy and life, he is a wonderful blessing. He struggled last year with all the mandates, masks, changes to his workplace and came very close to having a mental breakdown. It was a very ugly time and nothing I wish to witness again. We eventually were able to get a medical exemption for him that had to be from a physician, because no one would take his word for him being exempt. Even his employer, who knows he has a disability because that is how he got his job there, through a county work program, His employer was afraid to be fined, all because of the governor putting the pressure on businesses to make mask wearing mandatory. This seems to be the trend our governor is creating...mask vs unmask and now vaxxed vs unvaxxed. He clearly stated this in one of his pressers, we have 2 Ohios. No elected official should be stating that. Everything has been in complete violation of my son's rights and I felt like we were back to labels and unkindness from people who believed him as "selfish". People were so rude to him, it absolutely broke my heart. Someone even said I should get a sticker for my son stating he can't

mask during the whole mask fiasco, how appalling. This is not Nazi Germany, but it is sure starting to move closer to that. This will be next for all this vaccine madness for sure, passports and such, show your papers. Which we all know now, is not a conspiracy theory. My health information is my business, no one else's. This should not even be questioned. I don't see people supporting asking people other private information such as what other conditions they may have, hepatitis, HIV, or whatever. The line needs to be drawn, health information is to remain private between patient and physician as well as the decision of health care. Vaccination status should not be brought up in any situation. I have witnessed it so much, it's like people patting themselves on the back for taking something they couldn't even tell you what is in it. Apparently pharmacists can't either, because the information packets are blank.

Once this year came my son was past all the 2020 madness and he was in his happy place once again. Now we are entering a new phase and I am so very worried. Mandating vaccines and going even further to require vaccination status to enter certain places, how have we even come to this. Step back and actually look at what this is all causing. It is disgusting!! This will be discrimination against my son even more because he IS NOT going to be vaccinated, with any covid vaccine or other kind. He has paid enough for that already. What will happen, will he lose his job over this? Will he be barred from competing in a sport that he is so passionate about and hopes to eventually coach? Will he not even be able to coach because of his own choices he feels are best for his health? What will happen to his life if you allow businesses or the government to force mandate shots..shots that not one is 100 percent effective, not a single one. Polio comes the closest and that is it. Every single person could represent my son in our great state, would you expect everyone to not be free to make their own health decisions? The government has no business telling us what to do medically with our bodies. Medical professionals can not even force people. They can recommend and we can either take the advice they give, go get another opinion, or find another solution ourselves if we so chose. Our freedoms over our own choices are ours, granted by God and the Constitution of our great nation. As long as we aren't breaking the law, freedom over what we inject into our bodies is our decision alone and should remain that way. It literally boggles my mind that we are even having this discussion. My son has suffered enough through his

life because I thought I was doing the right thing at the time. You need to do the right thing at this time, do not carry the guilt like I have thinking you did the right thing because so called “experts” are saying this or that. We need to do better for everyone. We are free and our choices should remain so. And before anyone thinks I am some anti-vaxxer, my children have most of their vaccinations. My youngest child does have a current school exemption because he does not have the MMR vaccine, which is my right to decide as his parent, and he is perfectly fine. I spaced out his other shots because I was more cautious. Our pediatrician was very supportive of this and went with my judgement as his parent to make the best decision for my child. I am not anti-vaxx, but I am anti-ignorance now. The covid vaccines are new. We do not know the long term effects of them and to me that is not worth injecting something in my body or my childrens bodies. I even know of people who have gotten the shots and had horrible reactions. One even had a stroke and I am not the only person, there are many others like me who know of people who have suffered because of these current shots being pushed on the masses by use of propoganda. If people want it, they can go get it, it is as simple as that. And red flags should immediately go up when it is being pushed, advertised to the extent it is, bribes being made for it, and now the threats of losing ones job or not being allowed to freely go to certain places. Every person in Ohio should never be forced, whether it be an office administrator like myself or a healthcare worker, or a teacher...no one!! We are adults, adults who can make our own decisions. We are not owned by the government, the government is supposed to work for us, the citizens and fight on our behalf, for us..not against us. Pharmaceutical companies are looking to profit off of all of this and then in turn those same companies will compensate any agency that supports their cause. We know this all to well. Our medical freedoms are so very important. No vaccine should be forced upon any citizen of Ohio. It doesn't matter what the vaccine is. We have the ability to make that choice for ourselves. Free choice!! Please pass this important bill, our freedoms depend on it. Make a difference and support the people you represent. This bill does not say people can't get vaccinated, but it stands for medical freedom and our rights as free citizens to live freely and make our own decisions.

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

Sincerely,
Leah D. Yost