

2807 Greystoke Drive
Xenia, Ohio 45385-5724
August 17, 2021

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

I want to thank you for providing an additional opportunity to submit proponent testimony for House Bill 248. The bill, as it currently reads, is comprehensive and robust, able to defend the personal choice and privacy of those in Ohio who have chosen not to receive the Covid-19 or any other vaccine for any personal reason. Despite being ridiculed in the media for peripheral reasons, **this bill remains very important to me and to many families across the state of Ohio. In fact, it is the primary issue upon which I will be basing my vote in upcoming elections.**

I am a violinist and teacher, and the mother of three small children. While I live a healthy lifestyle through diet, time in the sun, and exercise; I have some digestive, hormonal, allergic, and autoimmune abnormalities that sadly may just be a result of bad genetics. I have chosen more and more over the past few years to regulate what I put into my body. I read every ingredient on packaged foods and mostly eat whole unprocessed foods. This takes a lot of work, but it is something I do for myself to put my own health first. Through diet, I was able to reverse a worsening autoimmune condition I had. This also serves my community because I am not a drain on society but rather a hard worker contributing to the needs of my neighbors and friends.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been hard on all of us. Thankfully, over time the death rate from those infected has lowered because we have gotten better and better at addressing the complications of Covid. And we have certainly seen the effectiveness of certain therapies and drugs to reduce these complications. We should be just as happy to see this as we are about vaccines that may help prevent the disease, especially with the growing body of evidence that naturally acquired immunity is just as robust as vaccinated immunity.ⁱ

Now that vaccines are available, anyone vulnerable to Covid is able to freely choose whether or not to protect themselves using this highly effective means. I have heard some people glibly state that Covid-19 is not a respecter of persons. It does in fact discriminate quite a bit – certainly by age, even by sex, based on preexisting health conditions, and even based on whether or not a person takes enough vitamins or gets enough time in the sun. Those persons who for whatever reason fall into a greater risk category for Covid are able to weigh the potential risks and benefits of the vaccine and make an educated decision for themselves. But just as I have no qualms about friends, neighbors, and family members who would like to get the vaccine – I also have no desire to force, explicitly or implicitly, those who do not want to get it.

When it comes to arguments against vaccine mandates, there are many cases to be made. One is that anyone over age 12 who wants to be vaccinated can be, and this ought to make them less vulnerable as an individual regardless of what the rest of those around them choose to do. 90% of epidemiologists agree that herd immunity for Covid will never happenⁱⁱ, so there is no reason to pursue universal vaccination from that perspective. We also ought to expect that in 30 years, the not-so-novel coronavirus will have less potency for anyone in any age group who gets it, because nearly everyone's bodies will have been exposed to it in one form or another and trained to fight it and whatever its future variants may be, vaccinated or not.

Another thing we need to address is requiring workers in any field, including medical personnel, to be vaccinated. Not all medical professionals agree that the vaccine is best for their bodies – if they did, they'd have all received it by now. For the same reason that we trusted these heroes to save lives in the pandemic, we need to respect both their medical expertise and their rights to decline this treatment for their own bodies. **Since most hospitals in Ohio have now mandated the vaccine, it is essential that this bill be passed before their shot deadlines, many of which are September 1st.**

And we know that vaccines can and do cause harm. “Safe and effective” is a marketing slogan, and like most marketing slogans, it is only partially true. Certainly, there have been many people who have had only short-term or nonexistent side effects to the vaccine. There have been others who have had life-altering reactions or even died. No matter what the level of risk, informed consent means that I go over the risks and benefits and make the choice for my own body, without being forced.

We need long-term safety studies on these new vaccines. We can't force people to take a vaccine when we don't know what the long-term health outcomes will be. I want studies comparing a large vaccinated group with a large control group, independently commissioned and over the next several decades. I'd like to have the unvaccinated compared with the vaccinated and assessed for autoimmune illnesses, heart disease, stroke, earlier death, and other signs of systemic inflammation. We have very few studies like this for vaccines in general in the United States because it is difficult to find a control group. In order for any of these studies on Covid vaccines to make sense scientifically, we need a large control group. If everyone gets vaccinated now, we won't have that.

Healthcare privacy is another issue that is extremely important to me. I am a small business owner myself, and I will not be sharing or receiving vaccination information with or from my customers. It is important that we uphold privacy so that we do not sow division in our society, producing factions of “have's” and “have-nots” in regard to vaccine status – as we are already seeing in other states.

Bottom line: we don't need to argue that vaccines are dangerous for everyone. If we can acknowledge the raw data that they have proved fatal or dangerous for some, if we can think of even ONE reason that a reasonable person might decline, if there is even ONE reason in the entire body of testimonies you've received that seems legitimate – that ought to be enough to tip the scales in favor of personal choice.

That is what this bill is about – free choice for each person, bodily autonomy, respecting us each as free agents able to decide for ourselves. We must prioritize personal choice and privacy, and it is what many Ohioans want. It is imperative that our voice be heard on this matter.

Sincerely,
Pamela Evans

ⁱ <https://www.news-medical.net/news/20210608/No-point-vaccinating-those-whoe28099ve-had-COVID-19-Findings-of-Cleveland-Clinic-study.aspx>

ⁱⁱ https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-00396-2?fbclid=IwAR3sm0WtK60AM- vp3XETCQUznuP_IY6bl0trh5cUN-clvEJB77j06tb1kk