

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 Rachel Dudenhofer and I am a stay at home mom and a part time registered nurse at a pediatric primary care office in the Miami Valley. I am in support of House Bill 248 because it will protect Ohioans from mandatory COVID vaccine requirements.

Some people cannot safely have vaccines and others do not feel the benefits from a vaccine outweigh the risks of side effects. Requirements for COVID vaccines do not take these concerns into consideration. Mandatory requirements also ignore logical concerns like natural immunity, the risk for severe side effects employees could experience (life altering effects are not that uncommon), and an individual's right to consent. Healthcare employees being mandated to have a COVID vaccine despite having a natural immunity is absurd. Yet this is the position many nurses find themselves in. My coworkers, as well as myself, have felt coerced and bullied to receive a vaccine that should be a matter of our own choice. My children are looked upon as threats since they are currently too young for COVID vaccines. They are not threats since they too have a natural immunity by having and recovering from the virus. I am also concerned for when COVID vaccines are available for their age group, that they may no longer be allowed to enter certain businesses or participate in certain events based on their vaccine status. This type of discrimination should not be tolerated. Yet right now in Ohio individuals are experiencing discrimination and are ostracized based on their vaccine status.

Many routine vaccines are helpful and have protected from disease. However, even these vaccines ought to be given with consent and not mandated. Recommendations ought to be sufficient for individuals to use and consider when making an informed vaccine decision. Individuals should not be discriminated against for their vaccine choice. Healthcare decisions should remain private and individuals ought to have a right to make their own health decisions.

Please vote in favor of House Bill 248 so it can protect all people in Ohio from vaccine discrimination.

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

Respectfully,
Rachel Dudenhofer