



Advocates for Ohio's Future

House Bill 248 - Written Opponent Testimony
House Health Committee - August 24, 2021

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the House Health Committee, my name is Kelsey Bergfeld and I am the Director of Advocates for Ohio's Future (AOF).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in opposition to House Bill 248 which seeks to eliminate current effective, fundamental and basic public health and safety measures trusted to keep Ohioans healthy and safe while leaving many more vulnerable to the threat of the Coronavirus.

AOF is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of over 500 state and local health and human services policy, advocacy and provider organizations that strive to strengthen families and communities through public funding for health, human services, and early care & education. We work to empower and support nonprofit organizations in the critical work they do, especially as it relates to lifting up the most vulnerable among us.

As a coalition of health and human service organizations we believe that good health is critical for maintaining a job, earning an education, parenting, and participating in community life. Health must come first on the path to self-sufficiency. We are concerned that the changes proposed in House Bill 248 will result in lower immunization rates, poor data collection, and more outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. In turn, greater instances of vaccine-preventable diseases will impact the long-term health and economic stability of our state, already struggling to emerge and recover from an ongoing public health and economic crisis.

Further, our public health infrastructure relies upon vaccinations long-trusted to protect all against many lethal diseases. Dismantling current public health protections and tools, like immunization requirements, as proposed in House Bill 248, jeopardizes the health and future of every Ohioan, especially vulnerable populations who already suffer disparate health outcomes, and creates more barriers toward AOF's mission for stronger, healthier people and communities. It would place our systems and healthcare providers under the weight of even greater burdens and cut holes in our already stretched safety-net of state and local assistance programs and service providers.

Our children are counting on all of us to create the Ohio they deserve. We want to live in a state where we create opportunity, care for and invest in people, and focus on equitable recovery. We urge you to protect health and safety of your constituents by opposing House Bill 248, and work towards policies that support the safety and security of Ohioans in times of crisis.

Advocates for Ohio's Future

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