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August 20, 2021

To: Members of the Ohio House Health Committee
 Re: HB 248-11

Dear Ohio House Health Committee,

As organizations representing nearly 2 million Ohioans, we are gravely concerned by HB 248-11, legislation that **puts ALL Ohioans, including children, at risk**. Among us are physicians, nurses, health commissioners, hospitals and business owners, who feel moved to firmly voice our shared concerns. At its core, this proposal would **destroy our current public health framework that prevents outbreaks of potentially lethal diseases, threaten the stability of our economy as it recovers from a devastating pandemic, and jeopardize the way we live, learn, work and celebrate life.**

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The legislature has heard that this bill's purpose is to prevent the COVID-19 vaccine from becoming mandatory, but HB 248-11 applies to ALL immunizations, including childhood vaccines. If passed, **this legislation has the potential to reverse decades of immunity from life-threatening, but vaccine-preventable diseases** such as measles, mumps, hepatitis, meningitis and polio. In fact, the words "COVID-19" or "coronavirus" are not found anywhere in the bill.

This legislation would also take away the rights of individuals who have businesses in Ohio to implement important safety measures meant to protect their employees, clients, and others. Many businesses have seen enormous fallout as a result of the pandemic and are working to rebuild and move forward. Business owners should each retain the right to carefully evaluate the unique circumstances they face, and make their own determinations about what is best for keeping the workplace healthy and their overall recovery.

As current Ohio law allows for school immunization exemptions to decline vaccinations for medical, religious, or reasons of conscience (known as the philosophical exemption), and businesses requiring vaccinations as a condition of employment include appropriate exemptions, we question the need for HB 248-11. This overly broad proposal would further strip away accountability and compassion for our fellow Ohioans, and cause severe disruption to our state's health, economy, and way of life. **It is our urgent plea that HB 248-11 be rejected, to protect the vitality of Ohio's children and families and avoid disastrous consequences for the future of our state.**

Respectfully,

Academy of Medicine of Cincinnati
Akron Children's Hospital
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Inc.
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Physicians
American College of Surgeons - Ohio
Anthem
Arthritis Foundation
Association of Ohio Health Commissioners
BASA – Ohio's Superintendent Association
Bio Ohio
Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)
Buckeye Health Plan
CancerCare
Cardinal Health
Center for Dignity in Healthcare for People with Disabilities
Central Ohio Primary Care Physicians
Charitable Healthcare Network
Children's Defense Fund
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber
Cleveland Clinic
Columbus Chamber of Commerce
Columbus Medical Association
Columbus Partnership
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce
Dayton Children's Hospital
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Greater Akron Chamber
Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association
Groundwork Ohio
Immunization Advocacy Network of Ohio
Immunize Colorado
Immunize Ohio
Inter-University Council of Ohio
LeadingAge Ohio
Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio
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March of Dimes
Medical Group Management Association
Mercy Health
Molina Healthcare
Montgomery County Medical Society
Mount Carmel Health System
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Meningitis Association
National Patient Advocate Foundation
Nationwide Children's Hospital
National Hispanic Medical Association
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
Ohio Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs
Ohio American College of Emergency Physicians
Ohio Association of Advanced Practice Nurses
Ohio Association of Child Care Providers
Ohio Association of Community Health Centers
Ohio Association of Health Plans
Ohio Association of Rheumatology
Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators
Ohio Association of School Nurses
Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators
Ohio Business Roundtable
Ohio Chamber of Commerce
Ohio Champions for Vaccines
Ohio Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics
Ohio Chapter – American College of Cardiology
Ohio Children's Hospital Association
Ohio College of Clinical Pharmacy
Ohio College Health Association
Ohio Counseling Association
Ohio Counseling Association
Ohio Dermatological Association
Ohio Health Care Association
Ohio Health
Ohio Hematology Oncology Society
Ohio Hospital Association
Ohio Manufacturers' Association

Ohio Nurses Association
Ohio Orthopaedic Society
Ohio Osteopathic Association
Ohio Pharmacists Association
Ohio Physical Therapy Association
Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association
Ohio Public Health Association
Ohio Society of Pathologists
Ohio Society for Respiratory Care
Ohio Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Ohio State Coroners Association
Ohio State Medical Association
Premier Health
ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital
Retire Safe
Science and Families Engaging Communities Coalition and
Action Fund
SummaCare
The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio
The Aids Institute
The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
The Christ Hospital Health Network
The Health Collaborative
The Ohio Council of Retail Merchants
The Ohio Foot & Ankle Medical Association
The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center
Triage Cancer
TriHealth
UC Health
UH Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital
University of Cincinnati Center for Excellence in
Developmental Disabilities
Vaccinate Your Family