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Committees:

Vice Chair of Energy and Natural Resources
Agriculture & Rural Development
Public Utilities

State Representative Christina M. Hagan
Ohio House District 50

House Bill 193
May 23, 2017

Chairman Young, Vice Chair DeVitis, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the Economic Development, Commerce and Labor Committee: thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 193. This legislation has been crafted after hearing the concerns of many Ohioans, health care professionals in particular, who feel their personal freedoms are being infringed upon as it relates to the ever increasing pressures and employment demands related to the influenza vaccination, this bill would prohibit the flu vaccine from being a mandatory term of employment.

On behalf of a medical professional from House District 50, who is being adversely impacted by employer mandated influenza vaccinations, I am carrying this legislation to empower Ohioans and give them the right to refuse the flu vaccine without placing their jobs in jeopardy. Currently, employers have the ability to mandate influenza vaccines as a term of employment, infringing upon an individual's ability to make decisions about their healthcare. In many cases, the requirement of the flu vaccine is a new mandate and was not a condition of employment at the time of hire. Under this legislation, organizational entities and employers will no longer be permitted to mandate influenza vaccines as a requirement for continued unrestricted employment or participation.

Many people, especially those who are in the business of keeping themselves and others healthy, do not want to inject strands of flu viruses into their system recognizing that the repercussions are not necessarily known nor are the positive intentions guaranteed. This flu season, the efficacy rate is project to be only 48% overall; however, interim studies show that most influenza infections were caused by the influenza A virus which has only a 43% efficacy rate. When this legislation was originally introduced, after the 2014-2015 flu season, the efficacy rate was at 23%. For populations under 2 and over 65 years of age the efficacy rates are even lower.

Voluntarily agreeing to take the flu vaccine, knowing the risks and low efficacy rate is a right that should be maintained, but to mandate such a vaccine is an egregious violation of personal

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freedom. This legislation is necessary to preserve the autonomy of the individual. I am both pro-business and pro individual responsibility; I understand that there are substantial pressures on these medical institutions to increase rates of influenza vaccinations in correlation with their federal reimbursements. However, I do not believe the federal government should be deciding for the individual what is best for their individual healthcare situation. Many respected professionals have left their place of employment or switched careers to protect themselves from this federal trend that is not effectively suppressing the flu from occurring in these individuals.

Thank you for allowing me to express the concerns that health care professionals from my district have brought to me, I hope you will provide these individuals with due consideration. I look forward to answering any questions you might have to the best of my ability, if I am unable to answer today we will ensure to provide you with the appropriate medical professionals with expertise to do so.

