

Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and Honorable Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony as an interested party on House Bill 435.

My name is Alicia Richcreek and I am a wife, mother and part time employee whose livelihood is on the line should HB 435 be passed. My husband's job could be in jeopardy as well should HB 435 be passed in its current form. The concerns I have about HB 435 is as follows:

Does not prevent COVID-19 vaccine mandates or protect medical privacy in the workplace, higher education, or daycare to 12th grade settings. Provides for exemptions based on medical, philosophical, religious, and natural immunities.

- Exemptions in the workplace apply only to current employees who are employed on or before the bill, if passed, takes effect. No future protections granted.
- Exemptions do not apply to students or employees in children's hospitals or intensive care or critical care units of a hospital.
- Exemptions in all settings expire in 2023.
- Medical exemption may only be signed by a primary care provider, not a specialist.
- Natural immunity exemption is a red herring- there is no existing scientific standard for immunity levels- vaccinated or unvaccinated, vaccinated immunity levels are scientifically not comparable to natural immunity levels.
- Written exemption required for reasons of conscience, including religious convictions create a "vaccine passport".
- There is no provision to prevent discrimination from employees seeking exemptions. An employer could put an employee seeking an exemption on unpaid leave. There is no language to address or prevent this.
- There is no penalty for violation.
- Doesn't apply to discrimination in public accommodations. A vaccine could be required to go grocery shopping and this bill doesn't address it or provide any protections against this.

Our ability to provide for our children and be participants in society should not be based on whether or not we choose to get a vaccine. It needs to be left to the individual and what makes sense to them. This is a slippery slope we are on. The people of Ohio deserve to have their right to choose be protected. No one should be discriminated against based on a private decision they made.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on why HB 435 will not be good for Ohio or Ohioans.

Sincerely,

Alicia Richcreek