

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the Ohio House Health Committee

Re House Bill 251: The Ohio Indoor Safe Air Act

Dear distinguished members of the Ohio House Health Committee,

I wished to write to applaud your efforts in consideration of The Ohio Indoor Safe Air Act (HB 251), and offer my support. I have had, like many, the unfortunate experience of experiencing first hand the devastation that Toxic Mold exposure can cause to one's health and life. Despite having formal education and background in the Biological Sciences, what I experienced over the course of 8+ years was completely beyond the realm of my understanding(s).

Over recent years there have been a large number of journal publications demonstrating the multitude of deleterious physiologic effects mediated by molds and mycotoxin byproducts. The history of this research primarily revolved around the ingestion of mold contaminated foods in livestock, and thus began with small animal models. However, more recently we are coming to realize the presence of pathogenic microbes and fungi & molds are often harbored in common locations where a history of water damage has occurred; residential housing, schools & libraries, and offices. Mold toxicity results in a multi-organ systemic illness, the presentation of which is dependent on one's genetic disposition and exposure severity. There is now a growing body of research suggesting pathogenic roles in degenerative diseases often mimicking common pathologies; such as cancers, heart disease, and even Alzheimer's.

Over the last 8+ years I've been treating and addressing downstream conditions of ongoing toxic mold exposure taking place at the office building I was employed. The exposures elicited a state of immune suppression resulting in a multiple opportunistic "end of life" infections, autoimmune system disorder(s), and neurological compromise. My illness was a mystery to most all traditional doctors, and I was given almost nothing in terms of answers. Many symptoms were nearly identical to traumatic brain injury with constant headaches, light and sound sensitivity, dizziness/dysequilibrium, neuropathy, speech and comprehension impairments, and confusion to name a few. In fact a quantitative volumetric MRI performed discerned regions of cortical edema (swelling), and atrophy. These are now known to be common "bio-markers" of mold toxicity, demonstrating the severity of sequelae.

From a once hopeful doctoral candidate, in 2018, I was urged to file for permanent disability. Fortunately a late realization did take place, and following appropriate labwork I was formally diagnosed by a board certified MD with mycotoxicosis, Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (CIRS), and Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS). I aligned myself with a practitioner that mapped out my recovery, now over two years into treatment I am thankful to be beyond those days, but still have not reached full recovery.

This experience would have never happened if there were standards in place to ensure proper safety for office workers, nor would it have been so severe if there were formal acknowledgment of the repercussions. There is a decade of my life which I have forever lost, but I realize this is much larger than myself. For this reason I applaud this house bill.

In my academic endeavors, I became quite fond of the phrasing context dependency. In behavioral neuroscience the environment/context is considered largely an extension of the organism, through this lens dynamics can be often viewed in reciprocity. We're now finding this relationship should not be parsed nor undervalued. We are starting to become aware the importance of this interaction, and a change in paradigm is near -- ultimately health can not be achieved in an unhealthy environment.

Thanks again for your consideration of HB 251. I look fondly towards seeing us making a positive impact for future generations!

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Erik Nelson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Erik Nelson

Campbell, A. W., Thrasher, J. D., Gray, M. R., & Vojdani, A. (2004). Mold and mycotoxins: effects on the neurological and immune systems in humans. *Advances in Applied Microbiology*, 55, 375-408.

Hope, J. (2013). A review of the mechanism of injury and treatment approaches for illness resulting from exposure to water-damaged buildings, mold, and mycotoxins. *The Scientific World Journal*, 2013.

Rea, W. J., Didriksen, N., Simon, T. R., Pan, Y., Fenyves, E. J., & Griffiths, B. (2003). Effects of toxic exposure to molds and mycotoxins in building-related illnesses. *Archives of Environmental Health: An International Journal*, 58(7), 399-405.

Weinhold, B. (2007). A spreading concern: inhalational health effects of mold.

Ratnaseelan, A. M., Tsilioni, I., & Theoharides, T. C. (2018). Effects of mycotoxins on neuropsychiatric symptoms and immune processes. *Clinical therapeutics*, 40(6), 903-917.

