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Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide support testimony for HB 319; "The Conscientious Right to Refuse Act." I could not possibly overstate how important it is for myself and others to retain the right to decline any drug or vaccination that would violate one's conscience or religious beliefs in any way.

To briefly summarize my views, I am a Christian. I believe according to scripture that the Lord gives us His Holy Spirit to guide us into truth and convict us of sin. 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20 states "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies." Over the past few years as I have learned to listen and obey the word of God, I have grown to take this verse quite seriously. As a result of my trust in Him and His great power at work in me, I have stopped taking three medications previously needed for migraine prophylaxis. I have eliminated many processed foods from my diet, eat organic foods whenever possible, and have lost approximately 70 pounds. I have also quit smoking at the Holy Spirit's prompting- something I had previously thought impossible. Finally, I have even changed the type of music I listen to as well as what I watch on tv. In other words, I guard what enters both my body and my spirit!

Romans 2: 15-16 declares that when we stand before God in judgement, our consciences will accuse us or excuse us. This means that we will be found guilty or innocent by God based at least partially on whether we have done what we believe to be right. In 2019, my conscience told me that I should not get a flu shot. When my then-boss insisted I receive one, however, I complied- without first asking the Lord for guidance. Immediately afterwards I felt a conviction that I had sinned- a horrible feeling which I now seek to avoid at all costs. In the words of the apostle Peter: "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5: 29). For me to receive the covid vaccination- or any other future mandated drug that my conscience did not approve- after this experience would be both a willful violation of my conscience and a transgression against my God.

When news of the covid vaccine mandates came to light, I had to make a choice. Would I stand for my beliefs, or would I capitulate to an overreaching policy that would be an absolute violation not only of my body but of my conscience? The choice wasn't simple, but it was easy. I decided to stand for my beliefs no matter the cost; thankfully I was granted a religious exemption and allowed to keep my job- a registered nurse with a now 21 year track record of providing outstanding care. While God gave me peace during this trying time, there was a real possibility that after all the good I had done as a nurse, my career could be ended in an instant. And what a disservice that would have been to the patients who were already receiving minimal standards of care from an overworked system during a time of crisis! And yet, no matter the cost, I could never agree to accept something that God has clearly told me to reject.

While this is an individual decision and I hold no judgement, my heart breaks for the many, many who have suffered both physical and mental torment as a result of the vaccine mandates. As such, I implore you to vote yes to HB 319 so that no Ohioan will ever have to suffer through this decision or its consequences again. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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