

HB 319 Proponent Testimony

Stay out of My Bloodstream: Honoring Reasons of Conscious and Religious Convictions to Prohibit Discrimination, Protecting Bodily Autonomy

Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somali, 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.”

Citizens should be free to refuse certain medical interventions for reasons of conscience, including religious convictions. They shouldn't be discriminated against for following their religious beliefs.

I am a Christian Constitutional Conservative, created in the image of God and in His likeness. I believe in the Bible, live by a biblical worldview and I rely on the Constitution to protect the rights given to me by God. God gave me freedom when He gave me life.

In the Bible, there are, approximately, 100 scriptures that connect life with blood because without blood, there is no life. Using medical interventions that could damage my bloodstream would be sinful and would violate my religious convictions. It is important for me to protect my God-given immune system.

The First Amendment guarantees the free exercise of religion as well as freedom of expression. One way freedom is expressed is through bodily autonomy which is the right to control what is done or not done to one's body without constraints or any control by others. The United Nations considers bodily autonomy a fundamental human right. In the 2021 report, “My Body is My Own”, the UN addressed the “power and agency of individuals to make choices about their bodies without fear, violence or coercion”.

Mandating medical interventions is an unethical infringement of bodily autonomy. Pushing medical procedures on people without informed consent or using coercion is inhumane. The protection of bodily autonomy is essential to freedom. Denying bodily autonomy is an essential component of slavery.

Because of my religious convictions, during the height of COVID-19, I didn't wear a mask nor take the shots. As a result, I was demonized and discriminated against. In 2020, Governor DeWine's statement that the benefit of the doubt should be given to the unmasked because there could be underlying reasons, was ignored. So, I was unprotected, left open to condemnation. Later, my vaccine status was challenged. I was refused entry to public and private spaces. I was told that I should be put into a camp. I was openly harassed and verbally abused by coworkers who refused to work with me. And, at one point, I was told that I should just die.

I was a social pariah. Nevertheless, I am glad that I courageously stood for my religious beliefs because my health remains intact. Sadly, some of the same people who abused me are

suffering from repeat occurrences of COVID, increased spike proteins, anaphylactic shock, myocarditis, blood clots, strokes, and A-fib. Some have died suddenly and some whose cancers were in remission are being diagnosed with turbo cancers. The only common denominator in these cases is that they all obeyed the mandated COVID protocols.

Discrimination for religious convictions is morally bankrupt. Being expected to sacrifice my religious convictions on the altar of another's fear in the name of protecting another's health, places my body in the master-slave continuum of oppression.

I trust God to determine what's best for my health, not our government, the World Economic Forum, the World Health Organization, bureaucrats, etcetera. Their one-size fits all, everyone has to do it, approach to medicine failed, miserably. I am healthy and I rarely take any kind of medication. Faith in God and natural immunity have served me well. So, why should I be expected to take medication for someone else? That expectation, also, violates my religious convictions and is discriminatory.

I don't take flu shots to stop someone else from getting the flu. I don't take insulin to control another person's diabetes. And, I don't take the pill to keep someone else from getting pregnant. Valid medical interventions work on the person for whom they are prescribed. Insinuating that a medical intervention will only work, if others also take it is disingenuous.

Stay out of my bloodstream!

No one should be discriminated against for refusing certain medical interventions for reasons of conscience, including religious convictions. I urge the committee members to please vote "yes" on HB 319.

Respectfully,

V. Erika Smith, PhD

Luke 12:11-12