

To: 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.”

It is extremely important to retain the right to decline any vaccine or drug that violates my conscience or religion without facing discriminatory action both now and in any future pandemic.

As an American Citizen, I hold dearly to the words of The Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. I am one of the governed; along with my family, friends, and countless numbers of US citizens and Ohioans. Additionally, The 1st Amendment of the Constitution regarding the exercise of religious freedom and the 4th Amendment to which states the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures. Therefore, violating a person by subjecting them to unwanted vaccines, medications or procedures would be an act of capturing someone using force, hence the 4th Amendment.

My own personal story began in late August 2021. I started with symptoms of Covid-19 at home and after several days of little improvement, was admitted to the hospital with pneumonia. Numerous times during the 5 day hospitalization, various nurses and doctors asked me the same question “ were you vaccinated for Covid-19”. As I answered no, I received various derogatory replies from these healthcare professionals. I recall a nurse reprimanding me by stating I would not have gotten sick with covid and pneumonia had I been vaccinated. At that moment, I was very weak and ill, unable to debate and just hoping for healthcare workers to care for and support me. For I too am a registered nurse and have worked in a hospital, my highest aim to care for the ill patient with the goal of wellness, not challenge them concerning their previous healthcare decisions or reprimanding them.

Ohioans should have their right of conscience and religion protected from the medical overreach of employers or those providing public services. Both the U.S. and Ohio State constitutions address the right of conscious and religious freedom. It is time to make sure that those freedoms are protected at the state level. I urge the committee members to please vote yes on HB 319. Sincerely, Trasie Schaffner RN. 6/10/24