

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 248.

My name is Andrea Lewis and I manage a small business in Gallia County, Ohio. For the past 15 months, I have been discriminated against daily because I have a disability that prevents me from wearing a face covering. Everyday activities such as grocery shopping, dining out with family, and medical appointments have become impossible for me. Most businesses have not allowed my documented medical mask exemption and have refused service to me. Fortunately, my employer did accept my exemption or I would have also faced losing my job of over twenty years. Many others in similar situations have been fired.

This same pattern of discrimination continues with the recent, more relaxed regulations on mask wearing for those who are fully vaccinated while forcing those who have declined the shot to stay masked. Requiring a "vaccine passport" to take part in everyday life will create two separate classes of people. We have an inherent, God given right to decide for ourselves whether or not to participate in a medical intervention, specifically a vaccine or experimental mRNA gene therapy.

Ohioans should not be forced to choose between taking an unwanted COVID-19 shot to stay employed or risk being fired and unable to feed their families. Coercion by our government, an employer, or a business should not be a factor in deciding what medical interventions we choose. As Americans, we should have the freedom to discuss medical treatments with our medical providers and make a personal choice.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to provide testimony on the need for and urgency of House Bill 248.

Sincerely,

Andrea Lewis
475 Pineview Drive
Gallipolis OH 45631
(304)412-3910