

HB 248--The Vaccine Choice & Anti-Discrimination Act

Proponent Testimony

Respectfully submitted by: Zoe McMaster

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.

I am writing to you today to tell you about my husband and my father, my everyday heroes, as the saying goes these days.

My husband and I have been married 33 years as of May 28, 2021. In those years since we first got married, my husband has done what was necessary to take care of myself, our kids, and our grandkids. He has never faltered in that care, and has never complained about what he had to do in order to provide for us. We got married in 1988. Two days after we were married, my husband left for Army Boot Camp, and we spent the next 4 years at Fort Stewart, Georgia, or at least I did as my husband was rarely home due to training. In 1990, 2 1/2 months after our son was born, my husband was put on notice that he would be deployed as a part of Desert Shield. In the following weeks, my husband received multiple vaccinations, the most notable was for the plague. They had to basically double up on the shots and it made him really sick. In late August 2021, my husband was shipped overseas. While there he experienced many horrors, some because of the enemy, but some because of our government. The company he was with had diarrhea so bad due to the unsanitary cooking conditions, and they also had really bad reactions to an experimental drug they were forced to take. You notice, the experimental drug wasn't given stateside, but was given while our troops were in danger. My husband took part in the surge that ended the war, and was present to see the Highway of Death and all of its gore. After Desert Storm was over, my husband finished out his enlistment, got out of the regular Army, and became an Army Reserve Drill Sergeant. He served in the Reserves for 5 more years. Upon returning to Ohio, his home state, my husband went back to work for UPS. He worked hard with little complaining, and retired from there at the age of 50, after 25 years of driving. By this point, our children were grown, and it became clear his physical health would not allow him to continue driving. However, instead of sitting home and enjoying his early retirement, my husband took a job that very few self-respecting males would ever take, that of a Special Education Aide at our local high school. There, he selflessly helps children to achieve their academic goals. He is held in very high-esteem by his principal and the teachers with which he works. Why am I telling you this, you ask? In early 1977, when my husband was 8 years old, during the peak of the Swine Flu vaccination fiasco, my husband contracted Guillian-Barre Syndrome (GBS). This syndrome is rare in the over all population, and even rarer in

children. Everything but his heart was paralyzed, and he spent the majority of his third grade year at home learning to walk again. A connection to the vaccine was never proven, however, the Swine Flu vaccination was known for causing GBS. So, now, at 53 years of age, when it is known that adults over the age of 50 have a higher occurrence of GBS, and it is known that individuals can get GBS more than once, and GBS is a known side-effect of the Covid-19 vaccines, without the passage of this bill, he will be forced to make a choice between being able to live a normal life, or to take the chance of dying or being permanently disabled by taking the vaccine. I ask you, is it fair to make a combat veteran, a hard-working provider, and a selfless helper of children with learning disabilities, take a vaccine, just so he can go grocery shopping, go to the movies, go to sporting events, and basically enjoy his life? If the vaccines are 99% effective, as the government keeps telling us, who is he putting in danger by being unvaccinated, the vaccinated, or the other people who **choose** to be unvaccinated?

My father is my second example of an everyday hero. He worked at Prudential and provided a very good life for my family as we were growing up. Unfortunately, he developed arthritis, and due to his multiple medication allergies, had to take a disability retirement in his early 50's. Instead of just sitting around, however, my father got involved in the local Road Association, and even spent years as a Councilman in his local town. Now, at the age of 80, my dad has arthritis, high blood pressure, and gout, along with various other maladies that come with old age. He has had 5 hip replacement surgeries, and a knee replacement surgery. Despite all of his various medical issues, my dad is only able to take Tylenol and the brand-name blood-pressure medicine Norvasc. All the other medicines they have tried over the years cause him to have allergic reactions and worsen his conditions rather than helping them. He also has a history of deep vein thrombosis, and has been treated multiple times for blood clots. Recently, he has stopped doing most of his volunteer work in order to stay home more to take care of my mother, who has beginning stages of dementia. None of my siblings or I live close enough to help my parents, so he is the only one who can take care of my mother. I ask you, would you expect a man who is allergic to almost every drug in production, and has a history of blood clotting issues to take a vaccination that will most likely kill him, knowing he is doing the hard thing and taking care of his spouse in the early stages of dementia? Is it fair for you to allow a corporation, an "individual" legally, but one who can't be directly harmed by Covid-19, to tell my father that he can't shop or do any of the other 100 things it takes to live nowadays, just because he is unable to take a vaccine for a disease that he has a 94.6% chance of surviving?

These are just two examples of people who will be directly harmed if HB 248 isn't passed. There are likely hundreds of thousands of people just like my husband and my father that will be forced to make a decision that no one should be forced to make. Therefore, I ask you to please vote for HB 248, in order to ensure that every Ohioan keeps their God-given right to bodily autonomy.