

4214 Roselawn Avenue SW
Massillon, OH 44646

May 22, 2021

The Ohio House of Representatives
House Health Committee
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee:

RE: House Bill No. 248: Enact Vaccine Choice and Anti-Discrimination Act

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of HB 248.

My name is Kimberly Nashold and I am a substitute support staff in my local school district, a retail customer service representative, and a proud veteran of the United States Navy. I passionately believe that all Ohioans have the right to make their own healthcare decisions, and the right to medical record privacy. These rights include the right of an individual to determine whether to receive the vaccination for COVID-19 or not.

I am not a data driven or mathematical person. I do not hold any special degrees. I am an American, an Ohioan, and former sailor. When I elected to join the Armed Forces, I chose to proudly serve in the United States Navy. I signed on the dotted line of my own free will. I choose that path. I wanted to serve my nation and my fellow Americans. I knew I was giving up my free will to choose so that others could live free and safe. I want all Americans to have the ability to experience the unalienable rights outlined in the Declaration of Independence of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

I have traveled the world. Among those places, were countries where women had few, if any, rights to decide for themselves. I have always respected the experience of seeing how their lives were different from mine. I appreciated the right to have choices as a woman in the day and age I grew up in. There are a lot of women who came before me to thank for that. I am very modest about my time in service. When co-workers, friends, and strangers take the time to thank me for my service, I still blush. I simply reply, "Thank you for being an American worth fighting for."

As a service member, I have received virtually every vaccine known to man. Although I am glad I had them, I did not have a choice. I had to take them. I was government property. I am OK with that because they protected me from deadly diseases. I chose to give up that free will when I enlisted to serve my nation. After my military service ended, I continued to choose to receive vaccinations when I felt it was necessary. It was never because my livelihood or employment depended on it. I did it because I decided what was in my personal best interest for medical care. Let me be perfectly clear, I decided what was best, not my doctor and certainly not a politician in Washington DC or Columbus...me!

The right to decide your own medical care is sacred because what about the rights of those who cannot receive the vaccine because of allergies? What about the men and women who do not want to take the vaccine for religious, and or cultural reasons? Will they be kept out of society? Where do you draw the line? Are you going to make sure that their civil rights are not infringed upon? Would this not create a discriminatory work environment? One's fear does not usurp another citizen's right to choose.

This brings me the HB 248: The Freedom Bill. When I heard Representative Gross state, "This is a freedom bill" I knew immediately it aligned with what I believe in: a right to choose my medical care and what I put in my body. I want the ability to make a choice without being forced, coerced, or bullied into it. I, and countless numbers of men and women before me, fought for that FREEDOM!

Ohioans did our part. We stayed home. We sacrificed. We closed our businesses, and we homeschooled our children. We were told we did not have a choice and that we were all in this together. For a few weeks, we did believe we were helping our fellow humans. However, after days turned into weeks, weeks into months, and now over a year later, we are finally told that we can have our freedom. Frankly, I was under the impression that price was paid for by thousands of Americans who fought in a war over 240 years ago. We have done our part. Now, it is your turn to do your part and ensure all Ohioans have the right to choose if they are to receive a vaccine, especially one that is in its experimental stage with only an emergency use approval. I choose no. Notice; I did not say never. I am saying just not right now.

A YES VOTE ON HB 248 tells me that my representatives are defending Ohioans' right to make decisions regarding their own medical care, that right includes when and if they choose to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, as well as their right to medical record privacy. I am not a politician or celebrity. I am not going to wow everyone with numbers, fancy language, or graphs. I am a simple girl from Parma, Ohio who served her county, saw the world, and chose to come back to Ohio and raise a family.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony on the urgency and need for HB 248, and thank you for being Ohioans worth fighting for.

Sincerely,

Kimberly A. Nashold