

Testimony of Lyndsey Ritze, PA-C  
Support HB 248  
Health Committee  
May 21, 2021

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

Thank you for considering my written proponent testimony on sub HB 248, which will offer broad protection to citizens regarding vaccine mandates and discrimination involving vaccine tracking and passports.

My name is Lyndsey Ritze. I am a Physician Assistant, practicing in the State of Ohio since 2010. I am also a mother, and the head of my household being that I am a single mother. When I began practicing medicine in 2010, there were no influenza vaccine mandates for employment in any hospital system in which I was credentialed. It was not until Medicare instituted a quality reporting program in 2013 that hospitals began requiring this. Why is that the case? Because hospitals risk paying a fine for not doing so<sup>1234</sup>. This placed many healthcare workers, including myself, in a very difficult situation. We could choose to accept this new mandate, which was not a condition of employment at the time of choosing a career in medicine, paying many thousands of dollars in tuition, or signing the employment contract, choose to find a different job where this was not a requirement, or choose to walk away from a career in which so much time, energy, and resources had already been invested, with student loan payments still looming. Some systems offer exemptions, which require many hoops to jump through including notarized documents, lengthy personal statements, and much prayer. Unfortunately, many requests for exemption are denied, as the payout from Medicare requires a certain percentage of hospital workers to have received the vaccine.

I've watched as many of my colleagues and patients suffered adverse reactions from their annual influenza vaccines. I watched as nearly all of my colleagues still fell ill with both influenza A and B in the same season, despite the requirement for vaccination. I prayed that my friends and coworkers would not suffer the fate of so many, whose testimonies I can count on again today, including life-long debility from Guillain Barre and SIRVA (shoulder injury related to vaccine administration). Where are our rights? Will our employers pay our medical bills if we are the victim of such a reaction? Will we receive compensation if we are no longer able to work and support our family? Is there any liability? Unfortunately, the answer to all of these questions is no. No, the employer who mandates a medical intervention is not held liable for any adverse reaction to that intervention.

I have been involved in the fight for medical freedom since 2016. In that time, I have worked alongside many amazing individuals who hope to affect change by educating the legislators on these important issues and how they affect their constituents. I have offered testimony for similar bills including HB 559 in 2018. I have prayed for the passage of previous bills to offer protection for employees from vaccine mandates. This is an issue close to my heart, as being a medical provider, informed consent is one of the tenets of practicing medicine ethically.

Informed consent requires the ability to decline an intervention. As a medical provider, every intervention I offer a patient, I have a duty to inform them of the risks, benefits, and alternatives,

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including doing nothing. It is not my place to coerce or bully a patient into accepting whatever intervention I am able to offer, but to explain how that intervention might help, and guide the patient into making the best decision for themselves, which at times is to choose no intervention at all.

Accepting a medical intervention should never be a condition of employment or a condition to participate in society. Especially when any and all interventions carry inherent risk. Many people may choose an intervention and suffer no ill effect, but there will always be those who experience mild or severe reactions, as nothing in medicine is one-size-fits-all.

As I've mentioned in previous testimony, vaccines carry significant risk. This is a fact that cannot be denied and is disastrously underrated. Please refer to the 1986 law passed to prevent pharmaceutical companies from being sued when adverse reactions including death occur as a result of vaccines <sup>5</sup>. Please also refer to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System created by our government to provide a place for those injured by vaccines to report their event and seek compensation from the trust fund created for compensation (not the vaccine manufacturers themselves) <sup>6</sup>. The number of adverse reactions being reported to VAERS for the COVID-19 vaccines is astounding, and the vaccines have only been in distribution for less than six months. We cannot be forced to take this risk.

As legislators, it is your duty to protect the citizens from discriminatory and potentially physically harmful practices.

Should I be forced to take the COVID vaccine, I am facing throwing away an 11 year career in medicine, including the investment required to become a PA, where it is truly my joy to serve my patients and restore health, with no certain future path for providing for myself or my daughter. I know that the number of Ohio citizens who are also concerned about this future is significant.

This bill will serve to protect the choice of which pharmaceutical products to consume and which medical interventions to receive, without allowing for discrimination of those who choose an alternate path of health for themselves or their families.

I extend my deepest gratitude for your time in hearing the concern of this mother and healthcare provider.

Please vote YES on sub HB 248.

Lyndsey Ritze, PA-C

<sup>1</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/faqs/vaccination/faq-influenza-vaccination-summary-reporting.html>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/flu/toolkit/long-term-care/reporting.htm>

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/nvpo/nvac/meetings/pastmeetings/2013/healthcare\\_personnel\\_influenza\\_feb2013.pdf](https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/nvpo/nvac/meetings/pastmeetings/2013/healthcare_personnel_influenza_feb2013.pdf)

<sup>4</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/PDFs/HPS-manual/vaccination/HPS-flu-vaccine-protocol.pdf>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.congress.gov/bill/99th-congress/house-bill/5546>

<sup>6</sup><https://vaers.hhs.gov/>