

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 Chris Mechlem and I have spent the past 3 years in the Medical Sales industry. Prior to my time in sales, I spent a total of 7 years working in the Cardiac Cath Lab as well as the CT department at one of my local hospitals. I support House Bill 248 because I believe that an individual has a right to privacy when related to their medical history. While I worked in the hospital it was taught to us, as employees, to respect a patient's medical history record and to not share that history with anyone. Doing such is a direct violation of HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. HIPAA is a federal law that was enacted to protect the patient's health information from being disclosed without their consent.

Being compliant with HIPAA was, and is still a big deal. Patient's and individuals have a right to privacy in relation to their medical history and I have seen firsthand that be tested within the hospitals. The very first question asked to someone should not be if they're vaccinated? However, it has become too common place within the hospitals and in society to ask anyone if they've been vaccinated. Those individuals should not feel forced to comply with this request and if answered directly by stating that they have not, be judged or ridiculed for not complying with what I believe is to be someone else's opinion about what is the correct action to take.

I do not personally judge an individual if they openly tell me that they are vaccinated, and I certainly don't feel like they should judge me for either not stating my vaccination status or stating that I am not vaccinated. As Americans we have choices to make and receiving the COVID vaccination is one of those choices. That is why I am a huge proponent of House Bill 248 because it protects an individual's choice to either be vaccinated or not vaccinated without discrimination.

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

Sincerely,

Chris Mechlem