

5/23/2021

Dear Chairman Lipps, Representative Gross, and members of the Health Committee for the state of Ohio,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is Deborah Meinerding from Liberty Township, OH. I'm a wife, mom and Physical Therapist currently working in the home health care field. I am writing to you in favor of HB248, the Vaccine Choice and Anti-Discrimination Act.

While I very much enjoy working for my current employer, I believe they feel their hands are tied to hold those of us choosing to mitigate this virus in ways other than the vaccine to a different standard than those choosing to participate in the experimental protocol. I would like you to consider their policy and make the safe assumption that my employer is just one of many believing they must institute discriminatory policies all in the name of "safety". More importantly, I'd like you to consider the end-game or long-term consequences of such policies.

Currently, employees at my place of employment who have chosen to partake in the experimental vaccine no longer have to wear N-95 respirators, may remove their masks when not working with patients, and are free from the burden of regular testing.

Contrast this to those of us who, for a myriad of reasons, are not participating in the experimental vaccine. I am choosing to divulge some of my personal health information in this testimony in order to further make my point. I have been suffering from an autoimmune condition for the past 35 years. In the past 5, this disease has taken a significant toll on my joints and I battle severe pain every day. It's been a journey to learn how to mitigate this pain so that I may continue pursuing happiness in my life, an inalienable right afforded to all. I'm currently on a medication making my body further immunocompromised. As a result, I've been advised by my doctor to NOT partake in the Covid-19 experimental vaccine. Because this vaccine has not been tested on people with conditions like mine, it's considered unwise to receive it.

Because I'm not participating, my place of employment requires I wear an N-95 mask when working with all my patients and to also keep it on when inside the business building where staff meetings are held and where I complete my paperwork. In addition to this policy, those of us not vaccinated with the Covid-19 shot must also take a Covid-19 test before \*Every Single Shift\*. This means I must test every day that I work. While I have received many vaccinations in my life, this particular one has proven to be too risky for conditions such as mine, a condition for which there is no cure. So, I ask you, for how long must I and countless others like me be considered a "lesser than"? How long will I be subject to rules and policies in which others are not? While I am not anti-vax (I have received all vaccines recommended to me in my life), I

have no plans to ever receive this particular one. Does this mean I will have to wear an N-95 and take a Covid test every single morning the rest of my working life and continue to be singled out by others? When will this end? So far, I've not been told I'm at risk of losing my job, but I'm reading where this is not the case with other employers.

While I'm facing discrimination for a choice I've made regarding my own body over which I am to have complete sovereignty, my story pales in comparison to the ramifications if this protection afforded us by HB248 is not passed. One need not look very far back in history to see where this is headed if this attempt to control our bodies is not stopped. Left as is, current business owners, both public and private, drunk on power, enslaved by fear, or pressured by well-intended but misguided public health officials, will inevitably become the "paper police" requiring citizens to show proof of vaccine in order to engage in society – including but not limited to remaining employed, gaining employment, attending concerts, shopping for groceries, attending college and even being issued a driver's license. Do we as an American culture, really want to live as those in Nazi Germany did during World War II? Are we as a culture, really going to negate all we learned that resulted in the creation of the Nuremberg Code? Without HB248, we are risk of doing exactly that.

Let me be clear. There is a real virus out there that has infected many, and while every death is tragic, the survivability of this particular virus, as I know you have heard countless times by now, is 99% for a vast majority of the population. We have come so far and learned so much since March of 2020. As a health care professional, I have a life-long interest in the human body, how it functions, and how hard it works to remain healthy. There are now 100's of 1000's of doctors worldwide going on record proclaiming the truths of EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS for Covid-19. Yes, TREATMENTS! Those of us unable to take the vaccine are especially grateful for this news. Why should we be discriminated against for choosing other ways to keep ourselves healthy in the midst of an endemic virus?

Lastly, I'd like to close with this point. Even if this "not-approved but only emergency authorized" Covid-19 vaccine ends up being approved and shown to work 100% of the time in preventing people from getting the virus, we must continue to have the RIGHT to refuse it. We have been given the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We, not any public or private entity, have sovereignty over the bodies God gave us. We, not any other organization, get to choose how we mitigate our health through our lifetimes. We alone MUST continue to have the CHOICE whether or not to participate in an experiment such as this particular vaccine that permanently affects our bodies for the rest of our lives.

Consider the reverse – what if you researched a particular remedy for a deadly ailment from which you are suffering. You've done your homework, consulted experts, educated yourself on the condition and even found a health professional that will provide you the life-saving

treatment you need. But then, for reasons unfathomable, your governing body steps in and makes policy PREVENTING you from having the ability to receive the treatment you want and need for your body. You've been told if you receive this treatment, you will no longer be able to engage in society and will be discriminated against. Their policy could eventually kill you and you know it. You would be outraged, and rightly so. You then would understand the critical need we all have to continue to have the CHOICE in how we treat our bodies.

You need not fear in passing this legislation. I say this with some trepidation as choices in health treatments for our bodies should NOT need to be legislated; as soon as we make this law, which I pray you will, a future Congress could come in and strike it down putting us right back to square one. But, unfortunately, this is where we have found ourselves in our current culture. This must be done and it must be done now before any more lives, jobs and livelihoods are lost.

Thank you again for listening to my testimony. God Bless you all.

Sincerely,

Deborah Meinerding, MPT