

Health Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of HB 248 in the state of Ohio as a deeply concerned citizen. I am a 51 year old man with a wife and two sons (18 and 20 years old).

The talks of vaccine passports have me very concerned for myself and my family. I do not think it is fair, lawful or ethical to force people to put something into their bodies against their will just so that they can partake in everyday life. I am not willing to be in the trial group because we simply don't know what the long-term effects of the vaccine will be for a few years. There is not enough data to claim that they are safe. The vaccine is experimental by any reasonable medical definition. Nonetheless, there has been a push to claim that the vaccines are safe without having any data to support those claims. That's a big problem.

I believe in our freedoms and I do not believe that anyone should be allowed to use our freedoms as a negotiating tool. The government is trying to use my God given freedoms as a carrot on a stick to force me to do something that they want me to do. I believe that this past year, we have set some very dangerous precedents when it comes to our rights and our government's overreach. If we allow the government to implement vaccine passports, we will in fact create a Caste system whereby one group of people will have rights and another group of people will not have rights. Additionally, we won't have any medical privacy from the government.

Additionally, the idea of the passports is not logical. According to the medical experts, vaccinated people will be less vulnerable to getting the virus and if they in fact get the virus, they will have much lessened symptoms. So, if the idea behind getting the vaccine is that those who get it will not be vulnerable, why should we force those who don't want to get the vaccine to get it? You have to allow people to make their own choices when it comes to their own health.

I also have many personal reasons why I do not want vaccines to be mandated.

First, my family has a strong religious objection to the covid vaccine. In various stages of vaccine development and manufacturing, some of the COVID-19 vaccines used cells originally isolated from fetal tissue (often referred to as fetal cells), some of which were originally derived from an aborted fetus. The use of fetal cell lines is simply not ethical. Our government, my employer or my sons' schools should not be allowed to force us to inject our bodies with a vaccine developed from this unethical practice.

Second, our entire family got covid 19 in January 2021. From the beginning of the pandemic, we started taking vitamin D, zinc and quercetin at the advice of our doctor and based on our own extensive research. When we got covid, we had what we thought was a mild cold but then two of us lost our sense of taste and smell. We recovered very easily and were actually grateful we finally got it because now we would have the natural antibodies and immunity. According to many health professionals, someone who has had the virus and then gets the vaccine has increased chances of getting a hyper immune response which can actually be deadly. When has it ever been standard medical practice to get a vaccine for a virus that people have already had?

Third, my oldest son Justin is on the autism spectrum. When he was diagnosed with autism, we were heartbroken. However, we were determined to do everything in our power to ensure that he could have as normal and fulfilling a life as anybody else. We stopped using cleaning chemicals and we started getting him involved in Cub Scouts and in Karate. We were also able to send him to a school that specializes in helping kids with learning differences. I don't know if Justin's autism was caused by the many vaccines that he received as a baby, but I do know now that I don't want him to get this vaccine because I'm not sure what the effects may be. There is not enough data to show that the vaccines are safe especially for someone on the spectrum. Also, it's very disturbing that our society would even contemplate instituting such Orwellian measures like a vaccine passport. Justin has daily challenges with communication and social cues that most people take for granted. I don't want his choices in the future to be even more limited because he isn't vaccinated against a virus that he has already recovered from. We will be giving in to fear and totalitarianism and the people that will be hurt the most are vulnerable people like my son.

Fourth, my youngest son, Adam is planning to attend Cleveland State University's film school in the fall. In late March an email from Cleveland State notified us that anyone living on campus would be required to be vaccinated. This was disheartening. Adam has already had the virus and is a very healthy young man. He is a third degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do working on becoming a Master and is also a black belt in Gumdo (swords) and is working on getting his black belt in Judo. Simply put, our young people are not at risk for dying or becoming chronically ill from covid. The data has shown this. However, the data hasn't shown that taking the vaccine is safe in terms of long term immunological disorders. Why take the chance if you are a healthy young person? We had our son write a religious exemption letter and email it. We have yet to receive a response from Cleveland State, but I worry constantly that his experience will be limited if vaccine passports are required. This is the only film school in Ohio and thus, his only choice to attend college. Again, the segregated society or caste system is what we are cultivating if we don't take action now.

Fifth, I am an employee with the Federal Government (Veterans Affairs). I may be forced to make the decision to work 100% from home and not partake in the team activities available to those that go into the office. It hasn't been mandated yet, but I fear that the government will force their employees to either comply and get the vaccine or choose to telework 100%. This is completely unfair to those employees that want to make their own health choices.

In summary, we cannot know yet if the vaccines are safe long-term and more importantly, we cannot hand our government this kind of control over our abilities to live free lives and make our own sovereign choices. If we give into this idea, our country will never be the same and all the freedoms that generations before us fought for will be gone forever. Covid passports are the first step on a road to tyranny. I beg you to do the right thing and reject covid passports now and forever.

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