

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

My name is Susan Riggins and I am a Water and Wastewater Lab Analyst & Operator with a Bachelor of Science in Environment and Natural Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony regarding Sub House Bill 248.

I was vaccine injured after a series of TB vaccinations in 2008. This caused my “incurable” autoimmune disease to go into a stage III diagnosis, prompting a recommendation for surgery as the only allopathic solution. Such a prognosis left me desperate for alternatives to these projected series of surgeries, and fueled me to pursue alternative healthcare options. At this time I also extensively researched vaccines and their role in modern medicine.

Fortunately, after a year of diligence, and an application of alternative treatments, I was able to put my autoimmune disease successfully into remission and avoid surgery altogether. Despite my efforts and success, my family doctor refused to acknowledge my protocol as a viable treatment for Hidradenitis Suppurativa (H.S.), and denied my right to obtain a medical exemption from future vaccinations. I have since found a family doctor that is more familiar with integrative health practices. He has both acknowledged my alternative treatment as viable, and agrees that the series of TB vaccinations was the most probable cause of the advanced stage of my autoimmune disease. That being said, due to a restricted list of approved CDC conditions for medical exemptions to vaccinations, my doctor is unable to give me a medical exemption, despite my condition being recognized as a disability by the State of Ohio, worthy of disability compensation.

In light of the current climate of potential vaccine mandates in the modern workforce, I’ve heard a litany of rebuttals from the proponents side of this new business protocol, that anyone who has a medical issue can easily obtain a medical exemption. This is demonstrably false. While I could have easily gone on disability within the state of Ohio, as a stage III H.S victim, I cannot obtain a medical exemption from the very cause of the advancement of my disease. By choosing to take my health into my own hands, and successfully reversing my symptoms, I was able to maintain viable employment as an essential worker to the State of Ohio. If I had followed allopathic treatment, I would most likely still be a burden to the State of Ohio, unemployed, and on disability insurance.

In addition to refraining from adding financial burden to an overwhelmed Ohio disability compensation program, my firm belief in medical autonomy and alternative health practices has allowed me to continue working throughout the entirety of the pandemic. As an essential worker, I was exempt from the CARES Act to work from home. Not only was I exempt from this luxury, but I was knee deep in pathogen exposure. While Ohioans were observing lockdowns in the safety of their homes, I was out on numerous emergency calls during the Great-Flush-of-All-Things-Not-Toilet-Paper. I unclogged an unprecedented number of sewer lines and treated over 10,000 residents’ wastewater without a pause in service. I performed these duties even during the time where there was limited PPE. I made do with the alternative

treatments to pathogen exposure and kept working despite potential disease contraction. I felt safe in my own knowledge of disease management and feel such an example of living-by-faith should be acknowledged, honored, and considered by those wishing to provide blanket treatment and protocols over an entire workforce and clientele.

There is NEVER a one-size-fits-all-quick-fix prescription to health, and there should never be an American work climate that demands such a one-sided view to health. In a climate steeped in inclusion of diversity, medical autonomy deserves equal share.

I share this because my personal medical protocols are not a fad, not a whim, not rebellion to “approved experts”, but a way of life, a deep conviction, and my truth to living optimally in today’s world. I implore you to keep Ohio medically free. I implore you to protect the Ohio workforce from medical intrusion from a corporate mindset that hasn’t considered the value of medical autonomy.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Riggins.