

Dear Ohio Legislators of the Health Committee,

I am writing to you today to express my full and deepest support for H.B.248. This bill, in its *entirety*, is an incredibly important piece of legislation that will protect the freedom and dignity of all Ohioans. My name is Alexa Yutzy, and I would like to introduce myself to you and explain why H.B. 248 not only has my support, but begs of me to spend my time, energy, and resources to be certain it passes - as it is written and without *any* compromising amendments.

I am a wife, mother, and professional healthcare worker. I have had the privilege of earning 3 bachelor's degrees in separate fields - Biblical Studies, Applied Linguistics, and Nursing - which I only state to show it is safe to assume I am well-educated on a variety of aspects of this bill. However, one does not need to be any of these things to know that it is the right thing to do to support someone's medical freedom while protecting them from experiencing discrimination.

I am appalled to see the list of opponents to H.B. 248. I am certain that the lobbyists of the medical entities and organizations who oppose this bill will push any and every current and future vaccination on their employees and clients if this legislation does not pass exactly as it is written. I have personally and professionally experienced this fight. I know many healthcare workers who have left the field, or who will leave the field, if their bodily autonomy is compromised, especially with the Covid-19 vaccine. Let me share with you how well most of these medical organizations protected their frontline workers during the Covid-19 pandemic and why they should have NO authority over the personal health decisions of anyone.

Despite knowing that Covid-19 was airborne from the very beginning, many of us who worked with Covid-19 patients were initially told *not* to mask around our patients to keep them from being afraid. Then we were told we could wear *bandanas* - bandanas! - to protect ourselves. Our N95 masks were taken away from us, hidden away in managers' offices and sat unused while staff were exposed and sickened with Covid-19. We were constantly told that we were running out of supplies (masks, gloves, gowns, etc), and that we would just have to reuse them. I was considered high-risk, since I was pregnant throughout the entire pandemic, and no accommodations were made for the safety of myself or my baby.

The CDC continuously changed its guidelines for health care facilities just so that hospitals could say "See? We're compliant, so you still have to show up to work" - knowing that this virus was airborne! I was told I could put my DIRTY masks in a paper bag to reuse each shift. Great. So now the germs that were on the outside of my mask were on the *inside* of my mask and I'm putting it back on my face to rebreathe contaminants. It was baffling.

I cannot emphasize enough how grateful I am for my place of work, as they eventually provided each of their staff members in patient care with sanitizable p100 half-masks. Other healthcare workers, at the *very medical facilities who oppose this bill* were not, and are not, as fortunate. The opposition to this bill by healthcare organizations is insulting and breaks the code of ethics

of many healthcare professions. These codes include statements that the healthcare team member will avoid coercion, paternalism, and interference with patient autonomy. Their viewpoint in favor of mandatory vaccination and discrimination based on vaccination status is certainly not shared by the majority of their very own frontline workers, who truly value medical freedom for themselves and their patients.

When someone is under my care, as their nurse I advocate completely for their freedom to make an informed choice on which medicines and procedures they desire. Believe me when I say that I am the nurse you want on your side if you are ever hospitalized to make sure what you receive is appropriate for YOU and not simply the population at large. I beg for the same loyalty from my legislators for myself, my family, and my community.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my viewpoint with you. So many of us healthcare workers feel powerless and silenced on this issue. Medical freedom is a battle I decided to take on years ago, and I feel compelled to represent those who feel that they are unable to speak out. I urge you to fight for medical freedom and stand up to the pressure of lobbyists who would seek to destroy H.B 248 either by not passing it, or by amending it in such a way that defeats the purpose of it. You must act on this chance to abolish mandatory vaccinations and discrimination based on vaccination status.

Sincerely,

Alexa Yutzy