

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 Ashley Six and I am nurse practitioner in Newark, Ohio. I write to you today to beg for your urgent attention to protecting the individual medical choices for healthcare providers across the state. Vaccine mandates from employers are coming in at an alarming rate with quickly looming deadlines, forcing compassionate dedicated employees to either accept a vaccine that they are uncomfortable with or risk the loss their entire livelihood.

As healthcare providers, we are taught the importance of patient autonomy from day one. Patients must be allowed to make informed choices regarding their healthcare and we must support their decision, regardless of our personal opinions. However, these employer vaccine mandates are stripping healthcare employees from that same autonomy that we preach for our patients. Do we not deserve the same respect allowed to our patients?

While I fully support vaccines, and believe that the covid-19 vaccine is appropriate for many people, I cannot support a widespread mandate that allows for no individual freedoms for employees. There are multiple reasons why a person may decide they are uncomfortable receiving this vaccine at this point in time: it has not yet received FDA approval, many things that have previously received FDA approval are later pulled from the market when undesirable/harmful side effects are found years into the future, the long term testing of this vaccine is limited based on the timeline from development to market, etc. The individual reason for declining the vaccine is unimportant, we must focus on preserving the rights of the individual to make this intensely personal health choice without fear of repercussions.

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

Sincerely,

Ashley Six APRN, FNP-C