

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 Ashton Mitchell and I am a Registered Nurse and the reason I support House Bill 248 is because I believe it to be unethical to strip people of their right to choose what they believe to be best for their own health.

As a nurse I have sacrificed my time, my money, my mental and physical health, and my very last ounce to serve my patients. As a healthcare worker I have been punched, slapped, spit on, and verbally abused more times than I can count. This is unfortunately all too common. I have worked short staffed and been completely overwhelmed because I was stretched so thin.

I stood strong in my profession during the last year while I worked through the pandemic where I had to treat Covid patients, while wearing the same N95 mask I had been wearing for weeks. We were considered heroes then. Now I am being forced to choose between a personal health choice and my career that I have given so much to, that I LOVE, and that I use to provide for my family with, including health insurance.

One of my concerns is that if I do not get vaccinated and get approved for a religious or medical exemption, I will be mandated to have intranasal testing done TWICE a week. (You know, the one where they basically scratch your brain.) These swabs are sterilized with ethylene oxide (a known carcinogen) to which the levels meet "national safety standards". But my question is have these tests ever been tested for frequent and prolonged use? And since it has been proven that vaccinated people can still get and transmit the covid-19 virus, and often times asymptomatic or with mild symptoms, why are the unvaccinated being singled out and punished for our choice?

Us nurses advocate for our patients' right to choose what they believe is right for their health with the information at hand. They have the right to refuse and we do not turn them away. Please don't turn our healthcare workers away. We deserve the same without having to give up our passion, our livelihood, and our rights. We all need to stand up for the people who take care of us in our time of need. The people who help us bring life into this world and hold the hands of people as they leave it. We need to do what is right!

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

Sincerely, Ashton Mitchell