

My name is Britt, and I am a Respiratory Therapist at a local Cincinnati hospital. I was born and raised in Lebanon, Ohio. I have spent the last 3 years of my life dedicated to respiratory care. I started my journey in college before the outbreak of COVID. I pushed through school during a pandemic and lock down. I started my student job in July of 2020. It was that day that I knew I had found my passion in healthcare. I loved every second of it, even the mundane tasks. I worked with COVID patients daily, sitting with some of them in my free time because they were stuck in isolation and their nurses did not always have the time to give them the attention they craved. I found even greater joy after I graduated and obtained my RRT and was able to work in the ICU with sick and vented patients.

I knew about COVID and what was happening to others that were older with underlying conditions. However, being young, I knew that even if I got COVID I would be ok. I did eventually get COVID, and it did not phase me, because I am a young and healthy 24-year-old. I write all of this to say that I should not be required by a hospital to take a vaccine with so many risks when I am not at risk myself.

This goes for all vaccinations. We should have the right to choose, with informed guidance, what we put in our bodies. Majority of us healthcare workers know the implications of not having certain vaccines, such as the MMR or TB vaccine. These are vaccines that have been studied for a long time, which we are willing to take to keep ourselves and our community safe. However, with newer vaccines, I believe that the community of health care workers are intelligent and can make their own discretion on what is best for them and their patients and what is not.

At this time, I am urging you to take action and pass House Bill 248. Some of us do not have time to wait for you and your cohorts to meander in this decision. We are losing our jobs, being hard pressed and harassed by coworkers, and ultimately having to question our own personal values and health just to make a livelihood in a career that many have dedicated their entire lives to and that we have found purpose in.

When it comes to the COVID-19 vaccine specifically, the risk is not worth the advertised reward. According to the CDC article published on August 6 of 2021 titled “Outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 Infections, Including COVID-19 Vaccine Breakthrough Infections, Associated with Large Public Gatherings — Barnstable County, Massachusetts, July 2021,” the difference between the viral load of a vaccinated and unvaccinated individual are the same. I personally have seen many different reactions to the vaccine, some severe and some less severe. I have also seen people with no reactions. However, the issue is not to question the vaccine, but to ask you to allow us to have the choice.

I am telling you, as a citizen of Ohio, to listen to the people of your state and get House Bill 248 passed and on to the desk of our governor and tell him that this is what the people want. The line has been crossed in the past and unfortunately, we let it go. Now the line has gone too far, and we are asking for your intervention on behalf of the people of your state.

As a health care worker, I support House Bill 248.

