

House Bill 248 Proponent Testimony

Camie McCorkle

House Health Committee

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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 Camie McCorkle and I am a concerned citizen residing in Ohio and a registered nurse. I am asking you to vote yes on House Bill 248 to protect the rights of Ohioans to make free and informed decisions regarding their health. I work in an Ohio hospital and my employer is one who now has a policy of requiring employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccine or be fired.

The rights of Ohioans to maintain autonomy over what they put into their own body must be preserved. The path that we are now on is leading to discrimination against those who decline to take a pharmaceutical product. When government and corporations coerce workers and threaten them with being fired if they do not take a vaccine, the medical ethics of autonomy and informed consent are violated. As nurses, we are always taught that those receiving a medical intervention have the right to make a free and informed decision regarding treatment, to weigh the benefits and risks of a procedure or medication and that they have a right to refuse treatment. We are taught that the decision must be respected. I was never taught that this did not apply if the medical intervention was a vaccine or if the person receiving it worked as a healthcare worker. Attempting to manipulate a person's decision into taking a pharmaceutical intervention by threatening to fire them is unethical. If the choice to decline a pharmaceutical product results in losing a job, not being allowed in stores, or being denied an education, it is not a choice that is freely made.

Some people make the argument that mandating a vaccine for a job or as a requirement to enter a business should be allowed because government does not have the right to tell business owners if they can require vaccines or not. I do not see how that is a fair argument though, when it is because of the actions of the government that businesses are enacting these mandates. The desired end result of government mandated masking and social distancing and lockdowns and harassment and fines on businesses was not elimination of a virus but shaping public opinion for the last year and a half to accept more mandates -vaccine mandates. The Governor referred to this in one of his press conferences last year when he stated that we could not return to normal until there was a vaccine. He obviously did not mean until there was a vaccine that people could decline because the use of the vaccine is being pushed on the public through forced compliance.

I starting working as a nurse aide in 2003 and have worked as a nurse since 2007 and have worked in nursing homes and hospitals and the only vaccine that there has ever been a work mandated policy on (besides the COVID-19 vaccine), in any of the jobs I have held, has been the flu vaccine. This was not commonly required in area healthcare facilities and hospitals when I started working as a nurse. Hospitals started requiring it when the reporting requirement to Medicare and Medicaid Services was

changed to require employee flu vaccine numbers. I mention this because this is another example of how government is involved in increasing vaccine consumer uptake on people who would otherwise decline the product if not coerced into taking it.

Maintaining autonomy over one's own health decisions uncoerced by government which is influenced by pharmaceutical lobbying dollars and corporations influenced by government is important if people are to remain free. I am against vaccine mandates to participate in society and passing House Bill 248 will prevent that for not just this new vaccine but for any, now or in the future.

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

Sincerely,

Camie McCorkle