

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 Carol Abbott. I have worked in the healthcare field for 32 years. The last 22 years as a family nurse practitioner. I support House Bill 248 for the following reasons:

- 1) Ever since the Covid shots were available, I have had patients in my office state relief when they realize I believe it is their choice if they want to receive the Covid shot or not. I have had many patients say they were afraid to come into the office because they thought I would ask them to get the Covid shot because I have always been a proponent of vaccines for my patients, myself, and my family. Because the Covid shot is still experimental and not fully FDA approved there is a lot of information we still don't know. It has to be the patient's choice whether they get the Covid shot or not. If they choose not to get the Covid shot they should not be discriminated against and should still be able to function in society and keep their job. I especially want them to know they are still welcome in my office and to never be afraid to tell me how they feel. I don't want patients to delay treatment because they are afraid every healthcare worker is a huge proponent of the Covid shot. I never want them to feel judged for making a choice that is right for them based on the research they have done.
- 2) I am Covid recovered and I am nearly 100% sure that I still have immunity to Covid 19. I work for 2 separate hospital systems in Ohio and I am exposed to several Covid patients on a weekly basis and have not gotten Covid again since my initial infection in March 2020. This is one of the reasons I do not plan on getting the Covid shot myself. Natural immunity is better than any vaccine can provide. Up to this point it has been my choice not to get the Covid shot, but if either of the hospital systems I work for mandate it then my choice would be gone and I would have to make the tough decision to get something I don't want or lose my positions. Covid recovered patients should not be required to get the Covid shot if they don't want it. This doesn't seem to be included in the herd immunity they are trying to achieve through the Covid shot program however. More than likely natural immunity is much longer than a year and possibly lifetime. We don't know how long the Covid shot immunity lasts. Someone should not be discriminated against for allowing their natural immune system to work!
- 3) Many prolife people do not want the Covid shot due to it violates their beliefs. All 3 of the Covid shots available in the USA have used aborted fetal tissue in some way or other in research and/or development. There are no options for devout prolife people without going against their conscience. There are many prolife people, including myself, that will go to their death before taking a vaccine that has in some way used aborted fetal tissue. I didn't realize how many of the vaccines (MMR, varicella, Hep A, etc.) have used aborted fetal tissue in research and development until I started researching the Covid shots in depth. For someone who is prolife, once you know this information, there is no turning back. I would

never be able to get a vaccine that used aborted fetal tissue in one way or the other after learning this information. For some people this doesn't bother them so that is their choice if they do want to get the vaccines that have used aborted fetal tissue. For devout prolife people they can't understand why there isn't an uproar about approximately 10,000 babies being aborted every Saturday, but we are hugely concerned about less than 1% dying of Covid. If my 2 work places mandate the Covid shots, and there is no option for one that has not used aborted fetal tissue in either research and/or development I will have to resign. I do have concerns about the Covid shots for many reasons, but this is the main one I would be willing to lose my jobs over. Even if 2 Christian hospital systems and the Vatican say it is alright, I am not going to go against my conscience on this.

- 4) A few years ago I recommended a Tdap vaccine to a patient who, unfortunately, ended up with a demyelinating disease that caused a permanent disability for him. I didn't even realize this had occurred until his wife came to see me and told me she spent several months blaming me for her husband's disability because I had recommended the Tdap. It was part of her healing to come in and let me know. My heart went out to her. Even though I recommended what I would have recommended for anyone who had not had a Tdap in the past 10 years, her husband, her, and her family were affected for life now. Likely a one in a million chance of this occurring, but it did. I thought about that daily for months and still think about it often. I changed that family's life forever. Even though it was his choice to get the Tdap vaccine, I had recommended it. Ever since then I have been more cautious about telling patients that although rare, life changing disabilities can occur with vaccines. I feel like the Covid shots have a much higher incident rate of long term disability and death, based on VAERS reports, than any other vaccine ever has. Therefore, IT MUST BE THE PERSON'S CHOICE IF THEY WANT THIS EXPERIMENTAL SHOT OR NOT. IT SHOULD NOT BE MANDATED AND THEY SHOULD NOT BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IF THEY CHOOSE NOT TO GET IT! IT SHOULD BE THEIR CHOICE TO RECEIVE ANY VACCINE OR NOT. WHETHER IT BE THE FLU SHOT, TDAP, HEPATITIS A, ETC. I am so happy this House Bill would prevent mandating any vaccines and not just the Covid shot. Although all other vaccines have been studied much longer than the Covid shot, it should still be our choice what goes into our body. It is long overdue for a bill like this. I think it took concern over the Covid shot for me to realize mandating flu shots is wrong as well. Especially since they are usually 40-50% effective. Working in healthcare, I have always gotten my mandated flu shot and never really thought too much about it. It is wrong that healthcare workers, like Michele Krinsky who testified for HB248 last week, lost her job of 29 years because she wouldn't get a flu shot.
- 5) Many people who are more holistic and take care of their bodies by eating well, exercising, and taking vitamins do not want to be injected with something that may cause more harm than good for them. GOD GAVE US AN IMMUNE SYSTEM! WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO USE IT THE WAY WE SEE FIT! Especially when the diseases in question have such a low mortality

rate. Even if Covid, the flu, pertussis, etc. had the fatality rate of small pox or bubonic plague it is still the individual's choice to be vaccinated.

- 6) Companies, including hospitals, who mandate the Covid shots are going to lose many good workers. Both hospital systems I work for have about a 60% Covid vaccination rate thus far. If mandated I think 15-20% may get the Covid shot to save their job. I think about 20% will leave however. Many of the vaccinated are incredible employees, but some of my fellow colleagues that have chosen not to get the Covid shot are some of the best, most compassionate, healthcare workers I know. People have strong convictions regarding this. Even though most of us have gotten our mandatory flu shots for years and years, this Covid shot is different. Employees are looking at this more critically and are not in a place where they feel getting the Covid shot is the right choice for them. I know that I don't want it. I have mentioned that above. I WILL SAY, HOWEVER, THAT I AM WILLING TO SEE ALL THE SICK UNVACCINATED PATIENTS THAT NO ONE ELSE WANTS TO SEE! Hopefully that says something about my character and the type of nurse practitioner I am. I look at each patient as an individual. I have always strived to provide excellent care. I do not want to give up a profession dear to my heart because I won't get a Covid shot that I have concerns about and goes against my prolife beliefs. I am not a harm to my patients. I am Covid recovered. I hope to be able to continue treating them. If HR248 passes then I will be able keep my jobs and treat my patients with the respect I always have.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to provide testimony on the need for and urgency of House Bill 248. **The choice to be vaccinated or not is that of the individual! It is a freedom bill worth fighting for!** Thank you, Representative Jennifer Gross, for sponsoring this bill! As a fellow nurse practitioner I am so thankful you are fighting for the people!

Sincerely,

Carol Abbott