

Dear Health Committee,

I write a testimonial today in support of HB248. I have been employed at my facility for 15 years. Currently, there is no mandate for the COVID vaccine yet, but I know it is a matter of time. When this time approaches, I feel I will have no other option than to be terminated from a job I love. I currently do not feel comfortable receiving the vaccine for personal beliefs. There is so much fear and conflicting information about COVID19, vaccinations, and treatments. The complicated state of today's society has created fear, animosity, and anger.

My biggest concern and fear are that introducing a vaccine mandate will soon create a perfect storm of health care collapse. Nurses are already on the brink of burnout and moral injury. We are already experiencing a critical shortage in nursing, and the mandate will be the factor to drive nurses out of healthcare. We cannot spare to lose any more nurses. We are at the tipping point of disaster as the COVID Delta variant approaches. I plea to the committee to understand that we, as nurses respect all patient rights. We always provide informed consent and respect patient's right to refuse treatment and freedom to choose their treatment. That is their right, and it is our right as healthcare workers, without judgment, repercussions, or discrimination. All nurses ask for is that we have the same respect. We may not be the patients in the organization, but we are still American citizens with the same freedoms and civil rights.

I love my career. I have worked in healthcare for 22 years ranging from nursing assistant to master's degree nurse. I currently teach clinical to first-semester students. I enjoy teaching our future nurses the wonderful career of nursing. I have been a Perioperative nurse for 12 years. I have vast experience in all areas of surgical specialties and help in an outpatient procedure clinic. I love where I work, the challenges I face every day, and providing comfort to patients during the scariest times of their lives. It is a calling, and I can't imagine doing anything else. This is my passion, and I have worked

too hard not to fight for my right. In recent days, I have felt nothing but hopelessness, dread, anxiety, nausea, and random breakdowns because of the force on healthcare workers in health care today and its effect on our healthcare system. Medical errors are the third-leading cause of death in America, and this is more than 250,000 deaths per year. The staff shortage this mandate will result will only increase this number. Please help us and our rights to medical freedom. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimonial.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Niese". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Niese RN, MSN, CNOR