

17 August 2021

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee:

United we stand. Divided we fall.

Although this bill may seem controversial to some, one thing I think we can all agree on, is that COVID-19 has taken a lot away from people. Loved ones, security, and freedom, just to name a few.

I am writing today as an advocate for freedom, in support of HB248, as God has put it on my heart to do so.

I believe that by passing this bill, you are showing Ohioans and the world that you support freedom. The freedom of choice, the freedom to live our lives, and to not be discriminated against.

I fear that if this bill does not pass, those that choose not to be vaccinated, will continue become second-rate citizens. Their movements will be further limited, their choices limited, they will be discriminated against and face segregation.

I want you to ask yourselves, what is the plan if even a small percentage of healthcare workers choose not to get this vaccine and are fired? What will happen to the hospitals that are already short-staffed? Especially if COVID is going to increase the census in hospitals and residential care facilities?

I've worked in long-term care administration. We were short-staffed 5-6 years ago, doing everything we could think of to recruit and retain good employees. I can't imagine what this will do, as this problem has not resolved over the years. Think of the patients and residents you will be hurting if you allow hospitals and facilities to fire good employees. Health care providers don't just require good medical competencies; they require heart and passion.

What do you think will happen to the residents and patients that must wait longer to receive care? What about the staff that stays? How will you fill the gaps?

Residents and patients that are unvaccinated are already being discriminated against. Health providers are refusing their care, making them stay away from others, and speaking down to them.

You might argue that weekly COVID testing will allow those that don't want the vaccine to stay at their jobs, or in their homes. How is that not a discriminatory practice? I've seen photos of postings that hospitals are already requiring separate break rooms or charting areas for those employees that are not vaccinated. How is that not segregation?

You might think that people should just get a vaccine to protect others. What makes one person's freedoms more important than another's?

If these vaccines were 100% effective at preventing the spread of COVID-19 and its variants, and had 0% risk, then I might view this differently. But, it's not.

We live in The United States of America. The land of the free. That means freedom for all to make their own choices, especially when it comes to what we put into our bodies.

If someone wants to get the vaccine and feels safer in doing so, great, they should get it! But if someone doesn't want the vaccine, their livelihood, passions, and freedom shouldn't be put on the line.

If hospitals are truly concerned about the safety of their patients, ask yourself why all staff aren't being tested? Current research shows that those that are vaccinated carry the same viral load as those that aren't. Equality for all.

I do not work in a healthcare setting any longer, but it is something that I will always hold near and dear to my heart.

I do work beside those that quite literally fight for our freedoms every day. I care about our country; in fact, I work for our government as a civilian. I do not write this as a representative of any organization. However, I think it's important to know that I support our war fighters that fight for freedoms. Every. Single. Day.

Will those that fought and died for our freedoms have done so in vain?

Will I soon be forced to "show my papers" to have access to food and resources?

I have already personally experienced discrimination based on my choice to not get the vaccine. What will happen if people continue to segregate those that want to make a different choice for ourselves and our families?

The United States has led the world since its inception. Let Ohio lead The United States.

United we stand. Divided we fall.

Which side of history do you choose to be on?

Thank you for your time and consideration and the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB248.

Sincerely,

Jensine Ballweg