

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 Katie Lewis and I am Radiologic Technologist at a large healthcare facility in Ohio. For the following reasons I support House Bill 248.

As a healthcare worker, I have worked tirelessly on the frontlines against the COVID-19 pandemic the entire time, to this day. Over the course of that time, I have diligently followed mandates, protocols, and guidelines that were, and still are, ever changing. Through these times, I have cared for patients, all of which I have respected, regardless of their choices, actions, and condition. A year ago, myself and my co-workers were called heroes. Currently, myself and many other healthcare heroes are feeling utterly ignored and disregarded because of the threat of being forced to take a vaccine which many of us do not want. Being forced to put something in my body that I do not want is ethically wrong. Today I ask that our state will stand up for us and protect our choices, rights, and liberties as Ohioans.

As an American, the freedom to make choices is what makes our country the best in the world. After all, this is the "Land of the Free", because of the brave. Myself and my fellow healthcare workers have been remarkably brave and have weathered this storm since day one; now we are fighting to be free. Free from mandates, free from being bullied and intimidated into doing something that is absolutely against our wishes. And free from discrimination based on the healthcare choices we make. I help patients take care of their bodies, now I am standing up for mine. If our government makes us to do this, what is to stop them from making us do other things that we do not want? I strongly believe that people should take the vaccine if they want it, and I absolutely respect that decision; I am asking that it remains a choice, and not a mandate.

Being a Radiologic Technologist presents many challenges and is also very rewarding. I am bound by a Code of Ethics that I take very seriously. This Code of Ethics is in place to guide our profession to a high level of ethical conduct. One of the points that stands out to me now is:

"The radiologic technologist delivers patient care and service unrestricted by the concerns of personal attributes or the nature of the disease or illness, and without discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, age, or any other legally protected basis."

This happens to be exactly what I am asking our state to uphold for me. Healthcare workers must respect their patient's choices, and do not treat any person differently because of their choices. It is my right to choose what goes into my body. It is the healthcare provider's duty to respect my choice. It is the government's job to protect it's people's rights. Healthcare workers have fought for you. Please fight for us and stop the vaccine mandate and the discrimination that will go hand-in-hand with it.

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

Sincerely,  
Katie Lewis, RT (R) (M)