



Substitute House Bill 248

Vaccine Choice and Anti-Discrimination Act

Kelley Schmidt

June 8, 2021

Dear Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo and members of Ohio House Health Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Sub H.B. 248.

My name is Kelley Schmidt and I have been a nurse for over 23 years in the central Ohio area. I have practiced critical care nursing for 22 years and hold a critical care certification with the AACN.

As an American, I take pride in the freedoms set forth by our Constitution. The freedom of choice is so important when speaking about an individual's health. As Americans, we have the freedom to choose our physician, our insurance plan, our hospital, our treatment modality, the right to a second opinion, the right to choose comfort care or to be revived. We choose on a daily basis what we put into our bodies from food to beverage, drugs, etc. At the end of the day, an individual makes their decision for their body. Thus, I support freedom of choice.

Vaccination should be an individual's choice just as any other healthcare related decision. Individuals should not face disciplinary action or fear of losing their job because they choose not to be vaccinated. My significant other has been told several times that he will lose certain accounts if he doesn't get vaccinated. As Americans we should have a choice and be respected for our choice.

I will highlight several reasons why I choose not to be vaccinated.

-Approximately 10 years ago, I worked with a nurse who suffered from Guillain-Barre after receiving a flu vaccine. Her life, both personally and professionally was changed forever. It took her over 2 years to walk again.



- My father was diagnosed with ALS in 2018 and passed away from ALS last year. ALS also known as Lou Gehrig's disease is a neurological disorder that ultimately affects the muscles. The protein chain which supports the muscle is affected thus, the muscle dies. Certain vaccines contain ingredients, which affect the DNA protein binding. Although the cause of ALS is unknown and familial ALS prevalence is low, I choose not to inject ingredients into my body that would affect the protein chain in my neurons and cause abnormal protein aggregation.

- A young 20 year kid came into the emergency room, diagnosed with transverse myelitis. He had received a flu vaccine 3 weeks prior.

- In my 23 years of critical care nursing, I have cared for hundreds of patients who have been diagnosed with a neurological condition of unknown origin. Most recently in 2019, there were at least 6 patients on one neuro-critical care floor who had been diagnosed with Guillain -Barre, a neurological condition in which the immune system essentially attacks the nerves. I was always taught that this condition is a rare adverse effect to vaccines yet I have seen this in many patients I have cared for and the nurse I mentioned above. It is interesting that I have witnessed this diagnosis extensively in my career yet its prevalence is noted to be low. So in 2019, I created education about Guillain- Barre and VAERS reporting. I was shocked at how many healthcare professionals, both nurses and physicians didn't know how to assess for vaccine adverse reactions or the timeframe in which to assess. I spent months educating physicians, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners on assessing for vaccine side effects and how to report vaccine reactions. In my experience in healthcare, vaccine reactions are extremely under reported.

In closing, I do not discriminate against those who choose to be vaccinated. I respect their choice for their body. I am asking that this committee vote in favor of Sub H.B. 248 and not discriminate against me for my choice for my body.

Sincerely,

Kelley A. Schmidt BSN, RN, CCRN