

August 11,2021

Hello Ohio House Health Committee,

My name is Kristin Parks, and I'm writing to express my support of House Bill 248. I am currently employed as a Registered Nurse in the Columbus area, and I have been working in healthcare for nineteen years in Ohio. As a Registered Nurse, I believe in freedom of choice. I also respect and advocate for my patient's right to informed consent. I care for my patients with kindness and empathy, and I do what nurses do best - educate and teach my patients regarding their health and healthcare choices. Sometimes my patients make choices that I don't agree with, but that is ultimately their choice to make! I honor my patients decisions and provide the same standard and quality of care without passing judgement. I felt called to enter the field of nursing to help people. In 2020 nurses and healthcare workers were hailed as heroes. We worked long hours, without proper PPE and we never stayed home. Healthcare workers were short staffed then, and the staffing shortage is even worse now. We continue to have to use the same mask for our entire 12hr shift. The same masks that we are wearing in and out of different patient rooms, contaminating these masks and going against everything ever taught in nursing school regarding infection control. Nurses across the globe are leaving the bedside due to unsafe conditions and personal health concerns that have been triggered by this pandemic. For almost one year, healthcare workers came to work without the option to receive a vaccine. We did this because we knew that our patients needed us despite our own fears and lack of protection against COVID. I continue to show up to work each and every scheduled shift, and NOT ONCE have I tested positive with COVID19.

My employer is mandating the COVID19 vaccine and requires many other vaccinations as conditions of employment. My employer makes obtaining a religious or medical exemption from ANY vaccine very difficult to obtain. In fact, in 2020 they DID NOT EVEN ALLOW ANY RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS from the annual flu vaccine. In 2014, a close RN-friend and colleague was injected with the employer- required influenza vaccine, and she developed Guillain Barre (which was documented as a proven vaccine mediated reaction with the VAERS site). This caused her to spend weeks in the ICU and then many months in a rehab hospital while she learned to walk again. She missed months of her three children's lives, and she continues to suffer from life-long neurological deficits to this today! The only reason she obtained this vaccine was due to the fact that our employer threatened to terminate her job unless she received this vaccine. Due to the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, this RN is barred from holding the vaccine manufacturer accountable for her life-long medical injuries.

My employer is demanding that unvaccinated employees receive weekly COVID19 testing and HAS NOT EVER required any routine testing for COVID 19 at any time during this "pandemic" for asymptomatic individuals. So, why would employers think that weekly COVID19 testing is needed for asymptomatic individuals for any reason other than to punish and discriminate? The vaccinated employees are also capable of spreading this virus, but will not undergo any COVID

testing as a condition of employment. Nationwide Children's Hospital is punishing those employees who file and receive a medical or religious exemption by excluding them from receiving merit raises or "COVID related bonus" money. At Nationwide Children's Hospital, the form to request a religious exemption asks employees for personal and private information regarding pregnancy such as the "date of conception" as well as the anticipated amount of time in months said employee plans to breastfeed. How is this any of their business to ask an employee? Healthcare workers throughout Ohio need our help! Healthcare workers deserve the same FREEDOMS as all Ohioans! FREEDOM SHOULD NOT DISCRIMINATE!! I am NOT in support of vaccine mandates for any group of people, and as a nurse, I am asking for the same freedoms to choose what is right for my own body and my health. This is my GOD given body, and it belongs to no one else. EMPLOYMENT DOES NOT EQUAL ENSLAVEMENT! Forced or mandated vaccinations are anti-American and unethical. Employers everywhere are using punitive actions to fight against those employees who are asking for religious or medical exemptions from this vaccine. An employees' personal convictions and sincerely held religious beliefs should not be an automatic reason to waive their rights to bodily autonomy or to exempt them from annual merit bonuses. Where there is RISK, THERE SHOULD BE CHOICE!

Ohioans need HB 248 to PASS and be fast tracked to protect our jobs! The healthcare industry needs this as well to protect against further staffing shortages and an even larger mass exodus from bedside nursing! ALL OHIOANS DESERVE THE SAME FREEDOMS!!!

Thank you for hearing my testimony,

Kristin Parks, BSN, RN