

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 248.

My name is Melissa Wilson and I am a Masters Educated Registered Nurse and respectfully ask that House Bill 248 be passed immediately without further hesitation. Like many of my peers my road to becoming a nurse was not easy. In fact it was the most difficult mountain I have ever climbed. I was a young single mother with a school-aged son and could barely put a roof over our heads. I went to class all day Monday through Friday. I would come home from school do dinner, chores, and tend to my child's needs. I would then study into the wee hours of the morning and go back to school with about 3 hours of sleep, maybe 4 on a good day. Every weekend was spent working a low paying job where I worked 12 hours each day, more if I could. I barely made ends meet and missed many of my sons activities. I kept pushing forward because I knew our reward would be great, and it was. I was finally able to buy my son clothes from an actual store and not from a consignment store, I could get a good used car, and eventually was able to buy a nice small home. But best of all, I was able to fill my hearts desire and do what I was called to ,which was to provide care to those in need and give back to humankind. I gained a meaningful career. I sacrificed a lot to get there and I never regretted it for one minute until this past week. All of the lost time and moments I will never get back, the hard work with lack of sleep, and even tears were all for nothing. And let's not forget the nice pile of school loans that I am still paying on.

You may feel that this is an easy decision. Just get the shot and all will be well. Well here is the thing...I am not by any means anti-vaccine. I think that vaccines that have gone through clinical trials and have a reasonable amount of evidence-based research are wonderful. I get my flu shot each and every year. The Covid vaccine is brand new without a reasonable amount of clinical trials and evidence-based research. It is irresponsible to mandate a healthy person, or any person who is not comfortable to take this vaccine. I find it very ironic that when I start to administer a drug or vaccine to a patient, that I must fully inform the patient what it is, why it is prescribed, how it will work to improve their condition, and the potential side effects. This is informed consent and patient rights. If I neglect to do this I will risk losing my job and potentially my license. If I provide the patient with all of this information and this patient refuses the medication or vaccine for whatever reason, I am to respect their right to refuse. Even if the medication or vaccine could save their life! If I were to threaten or coerce the patient to take the medication or vaccine, I would also risk losing my job or my license. Yet here we are! Where are my rights? If you cannot recognize the tyranny in all of this, can you at least recognize the hypocrisy?

If you are going to vote against this bill based on the reasoning that hospitals are a private businesses, and they can mandate whatever they want, please let me remind you that hospitals and health facilities in general are paid heavily by CMS – a government agency, and the better the facility performs, the more they get paid. Every process, protocol, and decision made in a health care facility is based on CMS guidelines. This argument is null and void. No person of sound mind and body should be forced to take any medication or vaccination whether it is FDA approved or not, period! This is a violation of patient rights, and in my mind a violation of human rights that is equivalent to tyranny.

If you are considering voting against this bill please think about your willingness or ability to:

try to hold and calm a wailing mother after watching her 10 year old child die from head trauma;

sit with a grieving young mother after learns that she is in full-blown AIDS that developed from a life of prostitution and IV drug use. Would you hold her hand or let her bury her head in your chest while she grieves?

read scripture to a dying man who is all alone because his wealthy family dropped him off to die while they vacation in the Caribbean;

kneel at the bedside and pray for an actively dying, and a very sinful, criminal man that God will have mercy and take him at his last breath;

accept an apology and a hug from a man that spit his HIV positive blood in your eye the day before while he was high on meth and severely agitated;

Spend the majority of your shift cleaning your patient from her persistent diarrhea caused by her terminal stage 4 colon cancer, while her family screams at you all day because you cannot make it stop.

Would you want to do any of this? How about on Christmas day or Thanksgiving day while your family members are looking after your child because you are working. I've done this plus more for over 20 years, all of us in healthcare have. Please consider your decision very carefully. Not passing this bill could be devastating to healthcare in Ohio. There has already been a nursing shortage for quite sometime. Think about the kind of care your parents, children, or other loved ones will receive if it gets worse. Some of you are probably still wondering why we just don't comply and get the shot, it will make things easier. Well, my grandfathers, great-grandfathers, all of the men before them did not fight in wars against communism and tyranny so that I would comply, conform, or cave-in to such a government. Doing so would be a slap in their face. I will not comply. This bill needs passed immediately. Thousands of healthcare workers already have their notices to be injected or be fired.

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

Sincerely,

Melissa Wilson, MSN, RN