

As a physician, I support HB218. It has been wrongly given the name “ anti-vax” bill by even some in the medical community. Public health has to be weighed against individual rights. I believe the COVID-19 vaccines work. However, there is evidence that natural immunity is as strong as vaccines and may provide more durable protection. Young adults and children are also at very low risk for becoming hospitalized or dying from COVID. Patients with co-morbidities like obesity are much more likely to have an adverse outcome from COVID. I believe we should spend our efforts persuading people to use the vaccines, not forcing them to do it, which could just cause them to become recalcitrant. As already has been seen in other states like New York, mandating the vaccine may be driving workers from the workforce and creating labor shortages especially in critical areas like healthcare and first responders. Allowing vaccine mandate also potentially opens the door to additional unrestricted vaccination requirements such as boosters, which needs to be studied further.