

Donna J. Sekman
Michael Sekman, MD
6120 Whispering Meadows
Canfield, OH 44406
donnasekman@outlook.com

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Re: HB 319

Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the Health Provider Service Committee:

Thank you for allowing us to provide support testimony for HB 319; "The Conscientious Right to Refuse Act." During Covid our family was faced with important decisions and consequences of discriminatory actions based on our belief that the effects of the Covid vaccine did not have the essential evidence needed for us to feel secure in voluntarily taking the vaccine.

Our daughter who worked permanently from home for a hospital system, was mandated to either take the vaccine or face a set of disciplinary actions including reeducation, a written warning with one week to comply and a final warning with merit and ISS being withheld. Again, she worked from home. She was never required to enter an office or hospital setting. Being single, and her job being the only source of income, she made the difficult decision to vaccinate on the last day. The following Monday, she was informed that they would not require the vaccine. This was wrong and incomprehensible in every way imaginable.

I, a retired pediatrician, have had 2 open heart surgeries. I will be required to have a third. I will also have to make the unimaginable decision to either get vaccinated or not have the necessary surgery as Cleveland Clinic still requires heart patients to be fully vaccinated for Covid. I have had extensive discussions with my cardiologist concerning this and it was a very sad day when my cardiologist admitted he had done no research on the vaccine but encouraged it anyway.

Open dialog and discussion are the most important components of having trust and a working relationship with patients. This was taken away during the pandemic.

No person should have to make the decisions our family has faced and will continue to face. Ohioans should have the right of conscience and religion protected from the medical over-reach of employers or those providing public service. Both the U.S. and Ohio State Constitutions address the right of conscious and religious freedom. I encourage you to make sure these freedoms are protected at the state level. I urge the committee members to please vote yes on HB 319.

Sincerely,

Michael Sekman M.D.



Donna J. Sekman

