



**Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom**

*Advocating for Medical Freedom since 2015*

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Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, and members of the Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for hearing my support testimony for HB 319, "The Conscientious Right to Refuse Act."

Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom is a 100% volunteer, non-partisan, non-profit organization advocating for Ohioans' right to choose or refuse any medical treatment, including vaccination. Over the past eight years, we have given countless testimonies on the issue of vaccine status discrimination. For over a decade, we have watched a majority of healthcare workers be required by their employers to subscribe to a mandatory vaccination program against their wishes. Many were denied their religious accommodations, even though federal Title VII civil rights law was supposed to protect them. We have repeatedly brought to the legislature's attention that healthcare professionals were being forced to choose between a flu vaccine and their job. We warned that if this issue wasn't addressed, it would only be a matter of time before a vaccine mandate affecting all Ohioans would be at your desks. When COVID-19 hit in 2020, we were not shocked by the coercive tactics used on citizens because we had already seen them used on healthcare employees. However, we were shocked at how paralyzed our representative government was in protecting our liberties. We provided testimony for SB22 and HB90, warning that mandatory vaccines for Ohioans were an imminent concern. In January 2021, we worked with Representative Gross to bring forward HB 248, a vaccine anti-discrimination bill that received six hearings, over 1350 proponent testimonies, and overflowed the statehouse atrium with citizens desperate for real vaccine choice protection. Our pleas were ignored.

We watched in horror as employees were fired or worse, vaccine-injured patients were denied pain pump refills or organ transplants if they did not submit to COVID or flu shots. We received countless emails from desperate college students who were months from graduating and now on the verge of the inability to graduate unless they violated their conscience and received the shot. One young man was referred to OAMF for help by an Ohio Senator. He was suffering horrific neurological side effects a few months after receiving his mandatory shot from Kent State. He was a weightlifter and athlete and now suffered from horrific burning pain in his legs and numbness in his hands that severely limited his activity, and periods of intense brain fog, which ultimately prevented him from working. There were hundreds of horrific stories that would require hours of testimony to even begin to cover. It was arguably the most egregious attack on our civil liberties in history, yet here we are, four years after that attack, still with zero protections for the citizens of this state.

Undoubtedly, the tired argument from the OH Chamber of Commerce that claims vaccine status discrimination legislation like HB 319 is "government overreach into private sector businesses" will soon resurface. But I will point out to the committee that the state currently has laws in place requiring that religious beliefs be honored with regard to employment, housing, and access to financial institutions. Why would honoring religious objections to medical interventions not be included in those protections? As an individual who is not a fan of big government, protecting the conscientious and religious rights of its citizens

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from forced medical interventions as a condition of employment or public commerce is one of the few things government SHOULD be regulating.

I don't see a reason to bring "science" into the argument today because anyone paying attention has watched it be manipulated, twisted, and politicized at every turn. With every passing day, it becomes abundantly clearer that the last four years were not actually about "science," they were about compliance. HB 319 is about personal liberty. It's about finally putting an end to discrimination based on your conscientious and religious objections to vaccinations or drugs. Either the Ohio legislature believes in all liberty or it doesn't. Either it believes our conscientious and religious beliefs are constitutionally protected rights or it doesn't. These are not pick-and-choose concepts based on whether or not they apply to a medical intervention. Our moral principles, like our constitutional freedoms, are not dictated by the scientific opinions of any legislator, employer, or business owner.

We know the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the healthcare lobbying organizations will tenaciously oppose this bill as they do every bill that protects vaccine choice for citizens. It is up to the Ohio legislature to decide if they will continue to represent those entities or if they will represent the citizens and the Ohio Constitution that they swore an oath to. The choice should be easy.

I urge the committee members and the entire Ohio House to PASS HB 319 prior to the summer recess so there is time for the bill to move through the Senate and become law before the impending bird flu pandemic. I do not believe this legislative body wants to be complicit in the next round of vaccine injuries and deaths due to vaccine mandates. I urge this committee to continue their record of supporting medical freedom legislation in this assembly and vote Yes on HB 319.

OAMF has been deeply involved in the process of drafting this legislation with Representatives Gross and Wiggam, so if there are questions regarding any provisions of the bill or specific scenarios, I am happy to answer those questions now.

Thank you,

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