

Support House Bill 1171

Mr. Brian

Annapolis Maryland

Dear Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Members of the House,

Good morning and thank you for your time and for this opportunity. My name is Brian and I am a police officer for a local Maryland municipality. The implications of the issue we are discussing today affect me and many of my coworkers directly as my employer has already imposed a mandate for the corona virus vaccine, as can be seen in an article by the capital gazette, in which my employer further states that eventually they would even terminate those who claim religious and medical exemptions.

To give insight into my career as a police officer, I would like to highlight that I have been an officer for 12 years and have always received the highest performance evaluations. I have established a reputation for being a proficient and compassionate officer. In 2019 I was recognized as the officer of the year for my department and on March 4 of this year i was awarded with a lifesaving award. I find it very troubling that in my field particularly that an employee's performance and dedication potentially holds no value in their employment status and that a medical decision could result in their termination. In an age where there is a cry for police reform and an emphasis on weeding out bad apples and retaining quality officers, I raise the following question: can we afford as a society to lose good officers solely because they wish to be free to make health decisions as they see fit?

People are free to choose to maintain unhealthy lifestyles which sometimes put them at greater risk for infections and diseases. People are also free to choose a healthy lifestyle that gives them a greater possibility of fighting infection and disease naturally. Both of these approaches are the right of each individual. If your employer can't control what you eat, your activity level, and other lifestyle choices which could negatively affect health, what gives an employer the right to enforce what medications an individual must subject themselves to, (which by the way can have negative health impacts). It has been accepted as normal precedence regarding many other medical decisions that each individual has a right over their own bodies i.e. the "my body my choice".

I strongly support the idea that medical decisions are the right of every individual and absolutely cannot be enforced by an employer nor can it ever be grounds for termination.