

SUPPORT HB 1171
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EM Committee-

I am writing to you today as a constituent in the state of Maryland, as a mother, a spouse, an employee, and concerned citizen.

This pandemic has been financially, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically burdensome on all of us. We are all desperate to get back to normalcy and have some relief from the past twelve months. As a mother to two young children, and an employee who works from home while my husband goes into work everyday, with parents who are aging, I am also desperate to get to a sense of normalcy.

But I am concerned at the societal and political push to have every American vaccinated and the new movement for employers to require vaccination as a condition of employment. Our country has done an amazing job of having a vaccination developed, manufactured, and distributed within the past year; but this vaccine is still under Emergency Use Authorization, as mRNA is new biotechnology for public use *and* is still a part of clinical trials until October 2022 for the Moderna vaccine. In the automotive world, it's encouraged to not buy the newest model of a car the first year it is released to give the manufacturer time to work the bugs out. In a pandemic when people are already concerned about their health and their finances, it is ethically wrong, and quite frankly dangerous, for an employer to require vaccination as a condition of employment while we are still in these beginning phases of vaccination administration.

According to the American Medical Association, "Informed Consent is fundamental in both ethics and law. Patients have the right to receive information and ask questions about recommended treatments so that they can make well-considered decisions about care. Successful communication in the patient-physician relationship fosters trust and supports shared decision making." Is requiring a medical procedure under threat of losing employment informed consent? Is it ethical? And while adverse reactions are deemed rare, can or should employers be held liable if their employee experiences a reaction to the vaccine that was required for employment? Should employers open themselves up to that risk? Who is financially liable if an employee is injured by a product they were required to take? Will employees be compensated? Will they be paid if they're out sick after the shot? Will the employer be required to pay these, or will the government subsidize this cost?

Employers shouldn't bear the burden of getting involved in medical decisions. HB 1171 protects them too. If an employer hires a diabetic patient, they do not require the employee to be on insulin; if they hire an individual with an autoimmune disease they do not require the employee be on a steroid; if they hire an individual who contracts the flu they do not require the employee

to take Tamiflu. When we begin requiring individuals to conform to a single standard of health, we lose the freedom of what makes our country and our state great.

No other medical decision is mandated for employment. No medication meets a one-size fits all approach. Each person's health is as unique as their fingerprints. Your health requirements are different than those of your neighbors, your mother's, or your friend's. Research is still being conducted on variables that affect the duration and severity of symptoms; to blanketly require one form of protection when others are still being researched is dangerous to the individual and may impede further, better research from coming to fruition.

In a time when the public is afraid for their health and their finances, they shouldn't also fear for their job. Our citizens are already struggling with job loss due to capacity restrictions and being deemed non-essential; the fear of losing their job when they feel coerced into a medical decision they are not comfortable taking shouldn't be added to the long list of concerns facing the public. The long-term safety studies have yet to be completed; in order to make a true, informed consent decision, an individual must know what the short and long-term risks are associated with that decision. If the long-term safety studies have yet to be concluded, it is not justifiable to require that person to proceed with vaccination despite valid concerns on undiscovered long-term safety.

I am asking you to Support HB 1171. Protect the business owners in Maryland. Protect the freedoms of your constituents. Protect us from fears of losing our jobs, from making decisions we are not yet ready to make, from coercion, from ethically and morally dangerous precedents.

Thank you for hearing from me.

Devon Ragan