
From: Mark/Julie Reynolds <praylds7@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 5:58 AM
To: Labor & Industry Committee
Subject: Labor and Industry Committee Hearing: February 25, 2021
Attachments: Describe why you support this bill.docx

Julie Reynolds

North East, Erie County

814.651.2877

Praylds7@gmail.com

February 23, 2021

Labor and Industry Committee Hearing: February 25, 2021

Dear Labor and Industry Committee,

Please support HB 262 The Right To Refuse Act.

HB262 needs to be passed to prevent employees from losing their employment or being discriminated against for refusing to take a vaccine. People should not be backed into a corner to have to choose between providing for their family and taking a vaccine.

As of 2/12/21, there have already been 15,923 COVID-19 Vaccine adverse events and 929 COVID-19 Vaccine deaths reported to the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System. Some short-term and all long-term risks of new COVID-19 vaccines are still unknown.

All vaccines carry the risk of injury or death so there has to be informed consent and the right to refuse any vaccine without penalty. The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program had paid out over \$4.5 billion in damages.

COVID-19 vaccine mandates are already happening in Pennsylvania. Atria Senior Living is requiring all 14,000 of its employees across 26 states, to receive 2 COVID-19 vaccines by May 1, 2021 as a condition of employment. Atria operates 6 facilities in Pennsylvania whose employees are subjected to this mandate or they will be terminated. The mayor of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania signed an executive order requiring all city employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19 In the absence of a protective state law like HB262, there are no state or federal employee protection

exceptions to employee vaccine mandates for all vaccines for reasons of conscience objections to all the vaccines being given to adults.

People injured by a COVID-19 vaccine have little recourse. Vaccine manufactures and providers are shielded from liability through the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act, or PREP Act. This federal law establishes that the only option for compensation for COVID-19 vaccine victims is the Countermeasures Injury Compensation Program (CICP). Only eight percent of all petitioners since 2010 have been awarded compensation through the CICP. There is a one-year statute of limitations to file a claim. No legal or medical expert fees are covered, no pain and suffering is awarded, lost wages are capped at \$50,000, and there is no judicial appeal.

While the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) allows employees to decline Hepatitis B Vaccines, and OSHA and many labor unions have expressed opposition to annual influenza vaccination policies that do not include religious and/or personal objection exemptions, there are far too many gaps in protection for employees to refuse vaccines for work.

Vaccines for 20 different viral and bacterial illnesses (not including the vaccine for SARS-COV2) are on the CDC's recommended adult vaccine schedule. These are all candidates for adult employment mandates.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission affirms the legal right of an employer to exclude the employee from the workplace even if an employee cannot get vaccinated for COVID-19 because of a disability or sincerely held religious belief and there is no reasonable accommodation possible. The state will have to step in and protect employees' right to delay or refuse vaccines. There is a high risk that government officials and other elites will attempt to make COVID vaccines compulsory. An early example of this is the University of Tennessee, which became the first university to require students and faculty to be vaccinated for COVID-19 when a vaccine is available. Operation Warp Speed's Moncef Slaoui has stated his intention to have the entire U.S. population vaccinated by June 2021.

Although most states have existing exemptions from vaccinations based on philosophical, religious, or medical objections, opposition to health freedom and keeping vaccines voluntary is on the rise. This is illustrated by a New York State Bar Association task-force group that stated on May 28, 2020, that COVID-19 vaccinations should be mandatory for all Americans, including those who don't want it for "religious, philosophical or personal reasons." Additionally, Dr. Anthony Fauci stated in a December 2020 interview that schools, local governments, and other entities would likely mandate COVID vaccines, and in January 2021, he refused to rule out a federal vaccine mandate.

We are already seeing actions in the government to restrict vaccine freedom. For example, new legislation is being introduced every year to expand, restrict, or eliminate vaccine exemptions.

HB262 needs to be passed to prevent employees from losing their employment or being discriminated against for refusing to take a vaccine. People should not be backed into a corner to have to choose between providing for their family and taking a vaccine.

Sincerely,

Julie L. Reynolds