

Written Testimony in Support of HB1171

Dear Chairman Davis and members of the Economic Matters Committee,

My name is Ted Meehan and as a private contractor as well as a business owner, I support HB 1711 to protect workers.

Workers in the state of Maryland need this protection. I would like to call attention to the December 2020 Equal Employment Opportunity Guidance which states that an employer can mandate a vaccination that is approved by the FDA. We currently do not have any FDA approved vaccine- but we will before the full safety studies have been completed.

Section K5 of the EEOC Guidance document says that an Employer whose Employee is unable to receive said vaccination, would have to be proven to pose a direct threat; to pose a risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual or others. Maryland employees have been following CDC recommendations for masks and social distancing and have been able to continue to do their jobs and earn a living without being considered a direct threat to anyone; so does the arrival of the vaccine transform employees into a direct threat?

The guidance goes on to state that if the Employer determines that the Employee cannot be vaccinated due to disability, that it may not exclude the employee from the workplace. But this guidance document does not speak to what protections the Employee has in determining what is right for him or her. Employee's health/disability is something that should be between a person and their doctor and not a matter of decision for his/her Employer.

The guidelines are changing every day on who can and should receive this vaccine. People with severe allergies or a history of Guillain-Barre syndrome, for example, are not recommended to receive this new and totally unprecedented vaccine. As the pre Emergency Use Authorization trials were only conducted on healthy volunteers, we are going to see more changes to the recommendations on who should and should not get this mRNA vaccine. Employees deserve time to let the science develop before economically coerced into taking an experimental vaccine that may not be right for them.

After living through the shut-downs of 2020, it is clear that Maryland employees need legal measures to protect their ability to economically provide for their family and it is why I support HB 1711.

Thank you Delegates for hearing my testimony and considering the need to stand with and for the Employees of the State of Maryland, whose needs ought to be represented.