SB839   UNFAV   Annette Nelson

March 1, 2022

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic I have been incredibly impressed with how our state, and specifically Montgomery County where I live, have handled the crisis. We have responded with measured, calm, scientific approaches to the situation: shutting down to give us some time to learn about this new virus and support our hospitals, opening back up when things are more settled, requiring masks which clearly help to stop the spread, etc. Our leaders have done a wonderful job with these tough decisions and should be very proud of their efforts.

However, I strongly oppose a vaccine passport. A digital passport does not help us prevent the spread of Covid. The vaccines are a helpful tool people can choose to use, but they do not stop the spread of Covid. According to the CDC website:

The Omicron variant spreads more easily than the original virus that causes COVID-19 and the Delta variant. **CDC expects that anyone with Omicron infection can spread the virus to others, even if they are vaccinated or don't have symptoms.**

And

Scientists are still learning how effective COVID-19 vaccines are at preventing infection from Omicron. Current vaccines are expected to protect against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths due to infection with the Omicron variant. **However, breakthrough infections in people who are vaccinated are likely to occur.** People who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines and get COVID-19 are less likely to develop serious illness than those who are unvaccinated and get COVID-19.
Source:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/omicron-variant.html

Though it is anecdotal evidence, I have personally known about 47 people since November 2021 that have tested positive for Covid. Surprisingly, they were all vaccinated and most were recently boosted. And in every case, they caught it from another vaccinated person, not an unvaccinated person.   Thanks to the vaccine they had a mild case, but they did still contract it and spread it to others around them.

If we spend the money to create a digital passport for the state of Maryland, we are wasting critical funds that could be used for other projects. Having a passport will not stop the spread of Covid. We will have sick, vaccinated people allowed to enter businesses, while healthy unvaccinated or those with natural immunity will not be able to.

While I understand the rationale behind this bill, it is simply not going to help stop the spread of Covid. Please oppose SB839.

Thank you for your time,
Annette Nelson, Silver Spring, MD