

To Finance Committee Members:

I am writing to urge you to reject SB 839. The bill requires the Maryland MyIR Mobile immunization record service to meet certain standards which will enable it to be used for COVID-19 vaccine passports. The bill also requires the Maryland Department of Health to implement a campaign to raise awareness of the usage of Maryland MyIR Mobile as a COVID-19 vaccine passport. While it is currently a voluntary system, it is an inappropriate function of the government to contribute to regulating access to venues, events, and services based on vaccination status. Standardizing a COVID-19 vaccine passport system is a state-sponsored endorsement of COVID-19 vaccine mandates and discrimination.

Many states have already prohibited such vaccine passports and I believe that Maryland would be wise to oppose this bill. Cities that implemented vaccine passport systems, such as New York City, were not able to slow the spread of COVID during the Omicron wave. Even if implemented with good intentions, the vaccine passport systems are not an effective mitigation measure.

Beyond that, they will segregate our society based on vaccination status, which will have the unintended consequence of segregating our society based on race and class. Even if it is not its intention, this bill will have a disparate impact on black, brown, and lower-class Marylanders and prevent them from fully participating in community life. That is a step backward that our state cannot support.

Finally, I believe that this bill is a violation of the principles of medical freedom laid out established in the Nuremberg Code in 1947 after the terrible acts that took place at the hands of the Nazi regime in the name of science. The first of ten points begins as follows: "The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential. This means that the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent; should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, overreaching or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable him to make an understanding and enlightened decision."

Even if the MyIR Mobile App is a voluntary program, it is still a form of state-sponsored coercion that is attempting to make it more difficult for individuals to make a free choice regarding vaccination. Many people have legitimate religious, philosophical, medical, scientific, and logical reasons why they do not want to participate in a mass vaccination experiment in which the potential long-term side effects are unknown.

I urge you to reject SB 839 and to protect the medical freedom of all Marylanders. A freer Maryland is a stronger Maryland for the sake of all Marylanders.

Sincerely,

Justin Kuk
Baltimore, Maryland