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INTERNAL MEDICINE

PEDIATRICS

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March 8, 2024

Re: House Bill 1422 FIRST PRESENTATION 3/8/24 1:00 PM

WRITTEN AND ORAL TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF THIS BILL

Human Relations – Protections Against Discrimination – Genetic Procedures

I am a practicing Internist and Pediatrician who has a special interest in the effects of the environment on a person's well-being. I have practiced continuously in the Great State of Maryland since July 24, 1978.

With the unlocking of the genetic code in the 21st century, more and more medical conditions have been identified that can be explained or confirmed by genetic testing.

The susceptibility of individuals to disease depends on their genetics and their ongoing interaction with their environment. For those healthcare professionals who investigate these interactions, genetic testing is an invaluable technique that adds to making a previously unknown medical condition knowable. And the genetic discovery can contribute to understanding mechanisms for treatment, modifications for treatment, and the consequences of treatments.

Each individual's genetic information is relatively unique (almost always not identical) and **personal**. That is much like having your assigned social security number. A person can voluntarily seek their genetic information such as with the multiple testing devices that help discover one's ancestry. A person or their representative can freely disclose genetic information if it may be helpful in diagnosing a relative's medical condition.

On the other hand, to **REQUIRE** dispensing or releasing genetic information as a condition for their interaction with various organizations, institutions, and government WOULD VIOLATE their INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS.

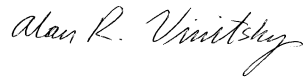
The mis-use and mis-handling of genetic information by uninformed or misinformed persons in a powerful position could contribute to discrimination on the basis of gender, or trans-gender, or medical conditions that may be classified as impairments under the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, the mis-use of genetic information could countermand the

completion of an individual's application for school, employment, use of facilities, or ancestry. By contrast, REFUSING to accept GENETIC TESTING SHOULD NOT BE A CRITERION when deciding an individual's status when evaluating an application.

Therefore, it is an individual's (or designated representative's) prerogative to choose to release genetic information. IT MUST NOT BE A REQUIREMENT that a person release genetic information as a condition for the individual's interaction with outside organizations.

Furthermore, that individual must not be penalized (or discriminated against) for CHOOSING TO MAINTAIN THEIR GENETIC INFORMATION PRIVATELY OR CHOOSING **NOT** TO LEARN OR DISCOVER their genetic information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan R. Vinitsky".

Alan R. Vinitsky, M.D.