

# HB1422

## Testimony

Good afternoon, members of the committee, and thank you for having me on here. My name is Dr. Gopi Vijaya, and I am a physicist by profession, and have been involved as a legislative advisor for the grassroot organizations working for medical freedom in Utah for the past several years. I am speaking in support of HB1422.

Biotechnology and Medicine are rapidly undergoing an unprecedented change, and new technologies that were the stuff of science fiction are quickly becoming realities over a few years or even months. In just over 20 years since the human genome was mapped out, we have had a slew of advances which seek to modify, alter, and transform the expression of genes for a variety of therapeutic and other purposes. Perhaps the most groundbreaking technology in genetic procedures is the one called CRISPR that led to the designer-baby controversy, which has already been used in China with the help of collaboration with Rice University. Indigenous voices have already sounded the alarm that DNA needs to be decolonized, as the tech is fast outpacing the laws.

As this wave advances, it is critical to keep in mind that in human rights, the right to your own genome is right up there with the right to your own body. Your genome is, so to speak, your “genetic body”. Just as no one can be discriminated against for the decisions they take that regard their own body, nobody should be discriminated against in any fashion if they choose *not* to undergo a genetic procedure. At the federal level, the importance of privacy of genetic information has already been enshrined, and this bill extends this and provides guardrails and includes a number of daily activities that *cannot* be a part of *any* discrimination. I believe the legislature play a crucial role in safeguarding these rights, and should favorably pass SB914. In doing so, they would be making sure that we remain masters of any advancing technology, and protect the citizenry from any negative social repercussions.