

Discussion and testimony today will be important and powerful. We are here today because real people, with real families, have been through extremely difficult times this last year and a half. Real people have been laid off, quarantined, and restricted from normal life. Statewide, the economy continues to show significant signs of stress, and businesses continue to fail as workforce shortages linger. Employers are still struggling to keep their doors open after more than a year of uncertainty.

As Chair of Workforce, I have fought for months to help Michigan move forward- and help get people back to work. Now, we confront another challenge to the state, and the discussion and communication today will sometimes be difficult to hear, or even frustrating for some. However, we as a state, and this committee, will always be here to stand up for Michigan's workforce and to advocate for a fast and healthy recovery for Michigan's economy. Today we are holding testimony only, no vote, on Rep. Sue Allor's bill, which would create an opt out for employees who do not want to be forced to get the mRNA shot.

Angry people are speaking out because they are concerned about increasing pressure to get the mRNA shot, and they don't know where all this is headed. My constituents, and people around the state, want to be heard, and are speaking out in defense of their own rights to medical privacy. They are warning us that their employers are starting to pressure them to get vaccinated. My constituents, and people around the state, are being mocked, threatened, and harassed because they are exercising their right to medical privacy. Fear is a powerful thing. They want to know why they are being pressured so hard to get a shot, when both vaccinated and unvaccinated people can get infected and pass the virus to others!

For this hearing, I expect us all to have a respectful, civil discussion despite our fear, our strong feelings. We'll be discussing whether or not a business should be required to provide opt out language for vaccines that they choose to require. Are businesses requiring vaccines now? Not most, with one sector being the exception. Is it being discussed as an option by national politicians and organizations? Yes. Are some businesses all over the state messaging to their employees that this is coming? Yes. Are employees being pressured with deadlines for the vaccine and repercussions if they don't get it? Yes. Are they afraid to speak out for fear of losing their jobs? Yes. So, business around the state



is also invested in what we have to say, because they are in the middle of this too. More on that in a second.

Our purpose today is to communicate the messaging that thousands of employees across the state have spoken loudly that they do not think a business should have the power to force an employee to put anything into their body. By providing a hearing for Representative Sue Allor's vaccine opt out language, we will also wrestle with two principles: our constitutional rights and the proper role of government in commerce, or business. Should a business be able to force a vaccine on employees? In a right to work state, is it a constitutional violation if they do?

These questions may not be fully answered today, but it is my intent today to allow real people to be heard, and to shine a light on the real complexities and problems this issue causes, so that we can all make the best decisions possible for each other, our families and the health of the economy as a whole. (Spoiler alert: it's about real people.) And also to point out that our Michigan businesses are being done a monumental disservice, because the only "data and science" they are hearing about is based on often conflicting media reports about guidance from politically motivated government agencies.

My constituents have been calling me in tears, saying The media's lack of coverage into emerging peer reviewed studies is horrible, COVID research reporting has been nonexistent, and they are angry because apparently, only one side of this vaccination issue and discussion is "acceptable." Real people that rely on their jobs to put food on their tables are being threatened, shamed, intimidated, and mocked for not agreeing to get an mRNA shot.

In order to get Michigan back to work and keep employees safe, Michigan businesses and families need access to good data, information about how to help employees get help if they are sick, access to recent developing studies that say both vaccinated and unvaccinated people can pass along this virus, and new studies that help us understand how the Covid virus works or how medicine treatments work. Businesses are literally making professional decisions for their businesses based on one sided, politically censored information. Today, I want every business in Michigan to know that this committee wants you to be successful and thrive. For every person in the state that is watching this hearing, I want you to be able to go to work and not be forced to take anything into your

body to keep your job. You have families to feed and a livelihood- and your bosses do too. So, let's get going, and please remember- always be respectful, even if we disagree.