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VACCINE RIGHTS
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September 6, 2012

Gail Haines, Committee Chair,
Health Policy Committee
Anderson House Office Building
124 North Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

CC: Mike Callton, Paul E. Opsommer, Kenneth Kurtz, Wayne A. Schmidt, Mike Shirkey, Thomas B. Hooker, Matt Juuki, Paul Muxlow, Ken Yonker, Holly Hughes, Joseph Graves, Lesia Liss, Thomas Stallworth III, George T. Darany, Kate Segal, Jimmy Womack, Marcia Marcia Hovey-Wright, Tim Greimel

Re: HB 5605: A bill to amend 1978 PA 368, entitled "Public Health Code," by adding section 20174.

Honorable Michigan Health Policy Committee:

I'm a nationally recognized Vaccine Rights attorney. I'd like to offer 3 short points for your consideration.

1. In my work with healthcare professionals in Michigan and nationally, I've seen that far more healthcare workers oppose mandatory flu vaccines than are willing to say so openly. Most fear losing their jobs for voicing their opinion. So, those workers who address you represent a much larger number who share their views. I say this not to inflate support numbers for HB 5605, but to underscore the fact that many healthcare professionals are not free to voice their professional opinion on this matter. There is something very wrong here! Employers' flu vaccine goals conflict with the opinions of many of their own professional employees. But the threat of termination lets employers easily suppress their employees' contrary views. It is critical, then, that the State step in to restore the balance.

2. I've helped healthcare workers in Michigan and throughout the nation exercise their right to refuse vaccines for religious reasons under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Right Act. Sadly, the overwhelming majority of hospitals implement policies that exceed Title VII boundaries and violate employee rights. Two large hospital systems each reported receiving over 1,000 requests for exemptions; one allowed only 4, the other few or none. Many workers qualify for religious accommodation, but hospitals routinely deny them their civil rights to enforce the employer's flu vaccine goals. Most workers who want the exemption won't even ask for it—and those who do and are turned down won't complain—for fear of losing their jobs. Again, this bill is needed to restore the balance.

3. Opposition to HB 5605 is not about health. Flu vaccines work in only 60% of recipients, and many workers have natural immunity without vaccines. If immunity were

the real concern, hospitals would have to test all employees to see who was immune; but of course they don't. Besides, there are over 200 viruses that cause flu-like symptoms; flu vaccines address only a tiny percentage of them. But the flu vaccines themselves can cause permanent disability or even death, and the FDA and CDC admit that 90-99% of vaccine adverse events aren't ever reported. Federal agencies are not unanimous on this topic ; e.g., OSHA opposes flu vaccine mandates. Given the uncertainties and reputable professional differences, individual healthcare workers should be allowed to form their own professional opinions about flu vaccines. But they can't do this without your support. Accordingly, I respectfully request your support for HB 5605.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan G. Phillips", is written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Alan G. Phillips
NC State Bar No. 30436