

My name is Aaron Ness, and I am a resident of Bismarck, ND and am writing in support of HB 1502. I am a 47-year-old male and I have stage 4 kidney disease. In 2022, I was denied admission to the kidney transplant waiting list by the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota because I would not get the Covid 19 shot. Going into my evaluation with the Mayo Clinic I knew that they were requiring the Covid 19 shot, however, they said they were allowing religious exemptions.

I qualified under every other requirement that the Mayo clinic had and was even told by one of the doctors at the Mayo clinic that I would be an excellent candidate for a transplant. Currently, I am not having any physical symptoms and am otherwise a healthy individual.

Although I currently don't need a transplant, my current kidney function allows me to be placed on a transplant waiting list so that I can accrue time for if I will ever need one. The type of kidney disease that I have is very unpredictable. I may never need a kidney transplant, or I could need one tomorrow. My concern with taking the Covid 19 shot is that it could make my kidney function worse or cause other health issues that I currently don't have. I have been warned by one healthcare professional of possible complications from getting the Covid 19 shot on my kidney function. In addition, I had spent a lot of time in prayer and in quiet reflection with God leading up to my evaluation with the Mayo Clinic. Although I am not against vaccines in general or anyone else making their own personal choice to take the Covid 19 shot, I felt in my heart that God was calling me to be faithful and obedient to him and to not take the shot. I submitted a religious exemption to the Mayo Clinic, however, they rejected it. After refusing to get the Covid 19 shot, they removed from transplant consideration; even though to do this day, I have yet to get Covid 19.

After being rejected by the Mayo Clinic, I applied to the transplant waiting list with Sanford Medical Center. Although Sanford requested me to take the Covid 19 shot as well as other vaccines, they did not require them for me to be added to their transplant waiting list. Sanford has been very respectful of my decision not to receive the Covid 19 shot and I am glad to say they have approved me, and I am currently on the transplant waiting list. The care I have received from the doctors and nurses at Stanford has been great.

I support HB 1502 because I don't want a healthcare organization to deny me or anyone else medical care in the future.

Sincerely,

Aaron Ness