

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee,

My name is Melyssa Howry and I am a resident of Plaza, ND. I would like to offer testimony in support of HB1505. Please read this personal story of how the exploitation of the Covid vaccine has affected our family over the past couple of years.

My husband is employed at a public school in a town near Plaza. In March of 2021, we learned that the school had decided to incentivize the Covid vaccine. But rather than just a simple reward for receiving the vaccine, they retroactively rewarded those who had already received at least the first of two doses (by March 23rd, the night of the school board meeting) with \$1,500. Those who had not yet received any doses, but did so by May 15th, would receive \$500. Everyone else, of course, would receive \$0.

This was a “Loyalty Payment” that was previously awarded to all teachers as long as they were in good standing. In 2021, the school decided that in order to be considered loyal employees, they must make a private medical decision that the school approved of, and subsequently disclose that private decision to their employer.

This special “Loyalty Payment” happened again in the fall of 2021, and once more in the spring of 2022. We thought they had finally begun to treat everyone as equals again, but in just December of 2022, they again awarded gifts cards valued at \$300 for all who received the booster, and \$100 for those who had not.

My husband attempted to speak with the school board and teacher’s union, only to be ignored. The rest of the staff have accepted this medical discrimination and poor treatment as just part of working at the school, and do not speak up for fear of retribution. I do not believe this should be legal. While I recognize that it was not a mandate, and the bill is intended to prohibit compulsory vaccination, I believe that this type of behavior by employers is similarly deplorable. Just as no one should be forced to get a vaccine in order to have or keep their job, no one should have to make a private medical decision in order to “enjoy any privilege” (wording taken from the bill) that comes from being deemed a loyal employee.

I leave you with this question: What kind of message does it send when employees are only valued based on what medical decisions they make? I appreciate your time and attention to this important matter. Thank you.