

Testimony
House Bill No.1458
House Human Services Committee
Representative Matthew Ruby, Chairman
February 4, 2025

Chairman Ruby, and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Kirby Kruger, Director of the Disease Control and Forensic Pathology with the Department of Health and Human Services (Department). I appear before you in opposition of House Bill No. 1458.

Self-spreading viruses and bacteria are everywhere, all the time. That is how these biologic agents and organisms survive. Each of us here today have bacteria living on our skin, in our mouths, eyes, and inside of us and we are able to transfer or release these bacteria by talking, sneezing, coughing, or not doing a good job of washing our hands. This bill would potentially apply to anybody who may have a cold, "stomach flu", "strep throat" or any of the thousands of illnesses that can be caused by self-spreading viruses or bacteria. For these diseases, these viruses and bacteria reproduce inside a person and the person who, may or may not be ill, can release the viruses or bacteria from their bodies. This can be through the respiratory track (coughing or sneezing), blood, feces or other bodily tissues and fluids.

According to the bill, this applies to particles or substances similar to any virus or bacteria that can spread from individual to individual. As such, this bill could potentially apply to blood donors who may have antibodies, generated specifically to neutralize specific viruses or bacteria, in their blood, from the various illnesses that they may have had in their lifetime.

In closing, any person who develops an illness from a bacteria or virus, that sheds that virus or bacteria, may be subject to the penalties outlined in this bill. This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to try to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.