

Shannon Dennison
East Machias

Good morning Senator Claxon, Representative Meyer and esteemed committee members; my name is Shannon Dennison, I live in East Machias, and I am a registered nurse and also hold a bachelors degree from Boston University with a major in biology and minor in chemistry. I am supporting the bill I worked for Downeast Community Hospital for over 7 years prior to my "voluntary resignation," per my termination papers, for refusing the Covid-19 vaccination during my high risk pregnancy.

I was initially granted a medical exemption which was accepted by human resources until 2 weeks later when the verbiage and format for the medical exemption was changed, and the medical exemption was revoked. I then applied for early maternity leave starting October 26, which was also granted by human resources, and then was also revoked based on needing a physician to provide a medical reason for going on leave early. I was a healthy 37 year old pregnant woman, with no comorbidities who had worked throughout the entirety of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Emergency Department. Needless to say I was unable to get authorization from my physician to go on early maternity leave.

The hospital that I worked for has lost myself along with many medical personal who were assets to the organization. Now nearly all departments are relying primarily on contract nurses to fill employee vacancies in a rural area where the community depends on care from not only the hospital but also the affiliated offices. In a field where staffing is already short and medical staff is already burnt out and leaving the field at a high rate, the mandate kicked it into high gear at DECH.

Without getting too personal, I have had multiple miscarriages and multiple fertility treatments including IVF in order to become pregnant and took several medications to maintain a healthy pregnancy, which is why I chose to refuse the Covid-19 vaccination. When reading the insert for the Moderna shot from their website, the only information regarding safety during pregnancy was based on a study an animal that has incredible fertility rates, rats. At the time of my research in September when my termination deadline loomed, there were no credible studies as to the longterm or short-term affects on pregnancy. It was simply a risk that I was not willing to take even with facing termination, loss of health insurance, and overall financial stability. I have lost an income that is needed to pay bills of everyday life, however when I look into the eyes of my healthy 3 week old baby boy, I know I made the right decision.

I support a 5 year hold on vaccine mandates until further study, and I thank you for taking my testimony into consideration when making your decision.

Sincerely,
Shannon Dennison