

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

P.O. BOX 750 › MADISON, WI 53701 › (608) 256-8900 › WWW.FFRF.ORG

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SENT VIA EMAIL:

Mike.Mikalsen@legis.wisconsin.gov

The Hon. Stephen L. Nass
Chair, Senate Comm. on Labor and Regulatory Reform
State Capitol, Room 10 South
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Re: Testimony in opposition to S.B. 662

Dear Senator Nass and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and our local membership to urge you to reject Senate Bill 662. FFRF is a Madison-based national nonprofit organization with more than 35,000 members across the country, including more than 1,500 members in Wisconsin. FFRF protects the constitutional separation between state and church, and educates about nontheism.

S.B. 662 rests entirely on the flawed assumption that “natural,” infected-induced immunity to SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is comparable to vaccination. Scientists have measured and compared the two, and have found that vaccines provide far greater immunity.¹ This, of course, is in addition to the fact that acquiring “natural” immunity by contracting the virus *requires one to contract the virus*, jeopardizing not only their own health and life, but also those of other Wisconsinites by taking up limited space at hospitals amidst a surge in the pandemic. In other words, contracting the virus spreads the virus and exacerbates the pandemic; vaccines do precisely the opposite.

¹ See, e.g., *Science Brief: SARS-CoV-2 Infection-induced and Vaccine-induced Immunity*, CDC (Oct. 29, 2021), www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/vaccine-induced-immunity.html (“Whereas there is a wide range in antibody titers in response to infection with SARS-CoV-2, completion of a primary vaccine series, especially with mRNA vaccines, typically leads to a more consistent and higher-titer initial antibody response. . . . Substantial immunologic evidence and a growing body of epidemiologic evidence indicate that vaccination after infection significantly enhances protection and further reduces risk of reinfection.”).

This bill comes on the heels of U.S. Senator Ron Johnson’s embarrassing comments on the same topic, where he asked of vaccines, “Why do we think that we can create something better than God in terms of combating disease?”²

Johnson’s assertion that modern medicine is an arrogant attempt to improve on a divine creation has been rightly and widely ridiculed for the nonsense that it is. The obvious fact is that medical science, including vaccination, has improved human health almost immeasurably compared to when church and state were united, when scientific advancement was condemned as heresy and witchcraft. **At that time, fittingly called the “Dark Ages,” life expectancy was low in large part because natural immunity was the only defense humans had.** Millions of prayers went unanswered as powerful churches condemned those who dared to try to “create something better than God,” as Johnson put it.

This committee should reflect on Johnson’s reckless and ignorant comments and show the nation that the Wisconsin Senate cares about protecting Wisconsinites based on evidence and reality, even if one of our U.S. Senators does not.

Please reject S.B. 662, which is based on faulty assumptions that have been thoroughly refuted by evidence-based scientific research. Amidst yet another global surge in COVID-19, this is a particularly awful time to weaken crucial public health measures based on religiously inspired ignorance.

Sincerely,



Ryan D. Jayne
Staff Attorney

² Vicki McKenna Show (Jan. 3, 2022), *available at* twitter.com/HeartlandSignal/status/1478394275973025803 (emphasis added).