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# SHAE SORTWELL

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2<sup>nd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Hearing Testimony**  
**Assembly Committee on Health**  
**January 17, 2024**  
**Assembly Bill 611**

Chairman Moses and members of the Assembly Committee on Health – thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on AB 611, relating to the right of health care providers to express professional opinions related to health or medical information or guidance.

Since being elected to my first term, I have received contacts from medical professionals who are concerned that if they express certain professional opinions, their licenses or certifications would be threatened and their jobs terminated.

Their practices are being jeopardized if they dare to challenge the echo chamber and choose to fulfil their sacred duty to speak out as best as they understand the science using their “greatest ability and judgement” as it says in the Hippocratic Oath.

AB 611 protects these individuals by prohibiting any health care entity and credentialing board within the Department of Safety and Professional Services from punishing or discriminating in any form against medical professionals who express their professional opinion to a patient or individual. With this bill, medical professionals in Wisconsin will be protected from any employer or licensing board/agency that attempts to unjustly punish them for simply upholding their oath.

Let’s make it a legislative priority to protect the medical rights, freedoms, consciences and judgements of all our medical professionals who are working hard to bring the facts and science to light without fear of retaliation.

I want to thank the committee for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions members of the committee may have.

**Stephen L. Nass**  
Wisconsin State Senator

**AB 611 The Right of Health Care Providers to Express  
Professional Opinions on Health and Medical  
Information**

Testimony of Senator Steve Nass  
Assembly Committee on Health, Aging, and Long-Term Care  
January 17, 2023 • 417 North (GAR), State Capitol

Thank you Chairman and committee members for allowing me to provide written testimony in support of AB 611. This bill will help protect the ability of health care providers to express professional opinions related to health and medical information or guidance.

The foundation of scientific inquiry involves the questioning and challenging of hypotheses and conclusions before, during, and after the research process. Free inquiry is integral to scientific progress and discovery.

Since 2020, unfortunately, we have seen efforts to undermine and diminish this free inquiry through various forms of censorship, intimidation, or the application of the label “misinformation” – whether accurate or not.

These actions have been used against some medical professionals, attempting to silence them from challenging the political status quo, such as speaking in favor of the novel use of drugs and treatments to combat symptoms of the Covid-19 virus. Some medical professionals have had their jobs and licenses threatened if they challenge the views of the political and healthcare establishments as they try to treat their patients and provide information to the best of their scientific knowledge, ability, and judgement.

Just last week, Dr. Anthony Fauci confessed to the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic that the “six feet apart” social distancing recommendation by him and other U.S. public health officials was not based on scientific data and had little effect on reducing the spread of Covid-19. Schools nationwide remained closed well into the second year of the pandemic as a result of these social distancing guidelines, despite the fact that they were disputed by both research studies and other medical professionals.

*“In God We Trust”*

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The school closures resulting from these policies led to significant learning loss that has been devastating for our children. However, any dissent was suppressed, silenced, ridiculed, and even punished. "It is clear that dissenting opinions were often not considered or suppressed completely," Committee Chairman Rep. Brad Wenstrup, who is also a physician, concluded after two days and 14 hours of testimony.

This bill establishes a right of health care providers to express their professional opinions related to health or medical information or guidance, including any statements, policies, studies, publications, or orders. The bill prohibits any health care entity from retaliating against, discriminating against, or taking action to punish a health care provider for expressing his or her professional opinions on medical issues.

However, the bill provides an exception for health care entities that are faith-based or religious institutions that have published religious, moral, or ethical policies from the requirements of bill, to the extent that an action taken by a health care provider violates these policies.

In addition, the bill prohibits any examining board or credentialing board in the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) from retaliating against, discriminating against, or otherwise punishing a health care provider for expressing his or her professional opinions. This includes denying, suspending, limiting, or revoking a credential or license.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of AB 611. This bill will help to protect scientific inquiry and progress by protecting the free exercise of speech by medical professionals. Similar legislation passed the Assembly last session on a 60-36 vote. Please contact my office with any questions committee members may have on this legislation.