

September 17, 2026

Submitted via email

Senator Stephen A. Huffman
Chair, Senate Health Committee
The Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Call to Reject SB 385

Dear Chair Huffman:

The Center for Inquiry (CFI) writes to urge the Senate Health Committee to vote against SB 385. **This bill would allow the practice of naturopathy in Ohio, subject to minimal government regulation, despite the fact that naturopathy is medically discredited pseudoscience.**

CFI is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing science, reason, and secularism in American law and policy. We have numerous supporters in Ohio.

Key Elements of the Bill

SB 385 authorizes naturopaths to practice in the state of Ohio provided they pass a “competency-based” national naturopathic licensing exam and hold a doctoral degree of naturopathy or naturopathic medicine from an accredited naturopathic medical education program in the United States.

Under SB 385, a licensed naturopath in Ohio may order and perform physical and laboratory examinations for diagnostic purposes. **They are also authorized to administer, order, or prescribe naturopathic devices, substances, and therapies, including food extracts, homeopathic medicines, naturopathic physical medicine, and dietary supplements.**

CFI’s Analysis

CFI opposes this bill because allowing naturopaths to practice with a license would endanger the health of Ohio patients and consumers who would be unwittingly exposed to medical quackery.

CFI has spent many years lobbying against naturopathic practices and educating policymakers about the dangers of this profession. We have documented that naturopathy education is “permeated with pseudoscientific theories, including the discredited idea that the



human body possesses natural healing powers which can be unlocked to cure diseases without surgical or pharmaceutical intervention.”¹

The field of naturopathy is based on misinformation that keeps patients from being able to make informed decisions regarding treatment. For example, many naturopaths deny the safety and efficacy of vaccines, instead recommending that patients pursue pseudoscientific “nosodes” as an alternative method of immunization.²

This helps explain why major state medical organizations such as the Ohio State Medical Association³ and the Ohio Osteopathic Association⁴ are opposed to SB 385.

To cite one local example, Columbus Naturopathic Medicine (based in Columbus, Ohio) states: **“Naturopathic medicine doesn’t suppress symptoms, it listens to them as your body’s way of communicating an imbalance. We believe the body is designed to heal itself.”**⁵ Columbus Naturopathic Medicine describes its services as including “lifestyle counseling,” herbal medicine, homeopathic remedies, and natural supplements.⁶ Its founder, Leah Gusching, declares that **“my health philosophy is grounded in the belief that the best medicine is the free gift of grace which, once received, restores the alignment of the heart.”**⁷ Elsewhere, Gusching speaks of “defeating the roots of evil and their poisonous effects in our lives,” which is only possible through “God’s love” and “whole-being, everlasting healing for which our souls yearn.”⁸

To say these nonsensical declarations do not inspire confidence in naturopaths’ ability to cure their patients would be an understatement.

Second, naturopaths completely lack the medical education and training that real medical doctors receive. Real physicians must obtain MD degrees from accredited medical schools, meet rigorous clinical requirements, and (after years of education and training) go through intensive residency programs. Naturopaths, on the other hand, must do none of these things. Naturopathic colleges in the United States merely require students to study discredited practices such as homeopathy and energy healing.

Britt Hermes, a former naturopath who now regularly speaks out against naturopathy, has written numerous exposés revealing the lack of adequate education and training. Hermes alleges that at the School of Naturopathic Medicine at Bastyr, she was never taught the medical standard of care for most illnesses and had minimal experience working directly with sick patients.⁹

¹ <https://centerforinquiry.org/advocacy/opposing-naturopathy>

² <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4443832>

³ <https://www.osma.org/aws/OSMA/pt/sp/legislative-issues>

⁴ https://www.ooanet.org/aws/OOSA/pt/sd/news_article/618589/_PARENT/layout_details/false

⁵ <https://www.columbusnaturopathic.com/#about-naturopathic-medicine>

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ <https://www.columbusnaturopathic.com/#about-dr-leah-gusching>

⁸ <https://www.columbusnaturopathic.com/blog/on-redemption>

⁹ <https://www.statnews.com/2016/10/20/naturopath-critic-britt-hermes>



Additionally, Hermes documents that, two years into her naturopathy practice, she discovered her supervisor had been importing a non-FDA approved drug from Austria to treat cancer patients. When she confronted her supervisor, he acknowledged he was “walking the ethical and legal line” but claimed that most naturopaths do the same thing.¹⁰

Despite these realities, SB 385 would allow naturopaths to perform a wide range of patient treatments, ranging from physical and laboratory examinations for diagnostic purposes to administering or prescribing naturopathic devices, substances, and therapies, including food extracts, homeopathic medicines, naturopathic physical medicine, and dietary supplements. It is dubious how many of these services naturopaths are qualified to provide.

SB 385 would waste Ohio residents’ time and money on ineffective care. False reliance on naturopathic practices means that patients are not only foregoing effective treatment based on medical science, they are expending time and money to do so. In many cases, this unnecessarily extends patients’ pain and suffering and allows diseases to progress and worsen—in the process, complicating effective medical treatment if and when patients do choose to go that route. In essence, there is both an opportunity cost and a financial cost to patients.

As the Cleveland Clinic warns, “you may need an antibiotic to treat a bacterial infection,” and “you may need chemotherapy for cancer.”¹¹ CFI would put it even more strongly: Patients in Ohio need science-based health care—not medical quackery—and it is up to their policymakers to create the appropriate legal environment for that to occur.

Conclusion

For the reasons provided in this testimony, CFI urges the Senate Health Committee to reject SB 385. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Azhar Majeed
Director of Government Affairs and Policy

cc:
Members, Senate Health Committee

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/naturopathy>