

December 15, 2021



Testimony of the American Lung Association
Opposing Senate Bill 662
Senate Committee on Labor and Regulatory Reform

Dear Chair Nass and members of the committee,

When we found ourselves in the midst of a respiratory pandemic in 2020, the American Lung Association knew we had an important role. We launched a \$25 million campaign to end COVID-19 and defend against future respiratory virus pandemics, funding research awards and grants for preventative research as well as working to evaluate the effects of COVID-19 on patients with chronic lung disease. We have worked in coalition with government, private industry, and public health organizations to address this pandemic on every level.

Senate Bill 662 proposes that, for employment purposes, natural immunity be treated the same as vaccination. While current evidence suggests that reinfection with COVID-19 is uncommon in the 90 days after the initial infection, experts are unsure how long this protection lasts.

An [August 2021 study](#) of people who had recovered from COVID-19 “shows that unvaccinated individuals are more than twice as likely to be reinfected with COVID-19 than those who were fully vaccinated after initially contracting the virus. These data further indicate that COVID-19 vaccines offer better protection than natural immunity alone and that vaccines, even after prior infection, help prevent reinfections.”

Our public policies should focus on encouraging individuals to get vaccinated, not developing natural immunity. [Over 198 million people in the United States are fully vaccinated](#), and billions of people worldwide have received the vaccine. The vaccines have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. The [evidence is clear](#) that they reduce the risk of hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19, as well as the risk of contracting and spreading the virus.

As the trusted champion for lung health, the American Lung Association is focused on slowing the spread and defeating COVID-19. To further protect the overall population and those most vulnerable, we need a sufficiently high proportion of the population to get vaccinated to stop coronavirus transmission. We hope you will work to protect the health and safety of all Wisconsinites by encouraging everyone to consider getting vaccinated and boosted.