

Assembly GOP passes COVID-19 vaccine bills

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GOP COVID-19 bills prohibiting discrimination based on vaccination status and accepting natural immunity instead of proof of vaccination will be sent to the Senate after passing in today's Assembly floor session.

AB 375 passed 59-34 along party lines. The bill would allow employees to present proof of natural immunity to COVID-19 through documentation of a previous positive COVID-19 test or a test showing the presence of antibodies.

Gary Hebl, D-Sun Prairie, called the legislation "dangerous and unscientific policies that will lead to the ongoing spread of COVID-19 in our state."

Rep. Lisa Subeck, D-Madison, noted the medical community's opposition to the bill, and the uncertainty around natural immunity.

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"We do not know how long that immunity lasts, we do not know how that immunity changes from variant to variant," Subeck said.

Rep. Scott Allen, R-Waukesha, countered Subeck's remarks and argued that the medical community is not united in its beliefs.

"The only members of the medical community that came to testify on the bill were in support of the bill," Allen said.

GOP Rep. Shae Sortwell of Two Rivers argued for the efficacy of natural immunity.

"Natural immunity is a real thing, it's not voodoo," Sortwell said.

The bill is opposed by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, the American Lung Association, the Medical College of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards, the Wisconsin Medical Society and the Wisconsin Public Health Association.

AB 316, which passed in a voice vote, would prohibit any government institution from discriminating against someone based on whether they received the COVID-19 vaccine.

Bill author Rep. Scott Krug, R-Nekoosa, said the bill will ensure that the government can't discriminate against citizens when it comes to their medical status.

Pro-Life Wisconsin, Vaccine Choice Wisconsin, Wisconsin Family Action Inc. support the legislation.

Democrats did not respond to the bill in session. The Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards and the Wisconsin Public Health Association have registered their opposition.