

To all it may concern,

We are writing to you as constituents, parents, and pediatricians to urge your support for HB 3063 which would end personal or non-medical exemptions for vaccines.

In our pediatric practice, we care for a number of families whose children are unvaccinated. These children themselves are at risk for all vaccine preventable diseases and in addition, their parent's choice puts other children at risk as well. Children under the age of one year cannot be vaccinated for measles, nor can children on cancer chemotherapy treatment or chronic immunosuppressive therapy. We have a six year old child in our practice with juvenile idiopathic arthritis who must take a medication that affects the immune system, and thus cannot receive live virus vaccines such as MMR and Varivax. Children such as this patient depend on herd immunity, or a large enough proportion of immunized children in an area, to stop the spread of communicable disease like measles. We are losing herd immunity for a number of diseases here in Oregon.

We spend many hours per week discussing the current outbreak with parents and counseling them to avoid crowds with their young or otherwise vulnerable children. Even the waiting room at our office is not a safe place for children who are too young or unable to be vaccinated, since they are at risk from others who have chosen to not vaccinate their children. Schools, daycares, churches, stores, sports and entertainment venues are also possibly off limits to those who cannot be vaccinated.

This ongoing measles outbreak was preventable. In addition to measles, we have a smoldering pertussis outbreak that puts infants under 6 months of age at risk. We need to do more to protect all of these children. Since not vaccinating affects more people than the child whose parent has opted out of the vaccine, it cannot be said to be a "personal" choice.

Vaccines are safe; they prevent disease, they do not cause disease. Reports of vaccines causing autism, diabetes and any number of other ailments have not been supported by facts. Scientists at the CDC, the Institute of Medicine and other reputable entities have never found a credible link between the use of vaccines and autism in children, nor any other condition.

Please vote to end non-medical exemptions from vaccines. Protect all of Oregon's children.

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