

From: [Stephanie Elliott IBCLC](#)
To: [HHC Exhibits](#)
Subject: HB 3063
Date: Thursday, February 28, 2019 12:32:53 PM

Dear Rep. Salinas & Members of the House Committee on Healthcare;

I am writing in support of HB 3063 in the Oregon Legislature. I am a Certified Professional Midwife, an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, a public health student and a mother. While I believe in bodily autonomy and a parent's right to choose what is best for their children, I strongly believe that that right does not supersede the right of vulnerable people to exist in the world and participate in society without the fear of contracting a vaccine preventable disease. One cannot choose whether their child becomes medically fragile or immunocompromised, but one can choose whether or not to vaccinate their child: a practice that is well established in the medical literature as being relatively safe and extremely effective. The individuals who make that choice --often people coming from a place of tremendous privilege-- are the ones who ought to forfeit their right to a public education, not kids who, through no fault of their own, are highly susceptible to disease and its associated sequelae.

As an Oregon midwife, I worked for many years with vaccine-hesitant parents who were anxious about vaccination, primarily based on information they'd heard from anti-vaccine advocates and poor access to legitimate science. I believe that scientific research offers reassuring answers to most questions posed by vaccine-hesitant parents, but I think we in public health do a poor job of disseminating it to the people. I suspect that attempting to change the mind of adamantly anti-vaccination advocates is mostly a lost cause, but I have seen that vaccine hesitancy is much more common. I fear that the practice of allowing non-medical exemption legitimizes the decision to shun one's social responsibility to vaccinate based on unfounded concerns and a complete lack of awareness of the significance of the burden of preventable disease among less privileged families. It is incumbent upon legislators to set the tone of the discussion and restore our state's faith in science. I come from a community where vaccine hesitancy is the norm. I am certain that many, if not the majority, of my friends and community will oppose this bill. I regret that because I do not think that our aims and values are all that different, but I look to you, legislators, to be leaders. I look to you to be brave in the face of loud voices who use junk science to delegitimize one of the most profoundly beneficial medical inventions in human history. Just like I look to you to demonstrate leadership in climate change, I ask you to face the throngs of angry and confused parents, to defend science and protect human lives.

Thank you for your yes vote on HB 3063.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Elliott, CPM, IBCLC