

To: Representative Andrea Salinas, Representative Cedric Hayden, Representative Rob Nosse, Representative Teresa Alonso Leon, Representative Denyc Boles, Representative Christine Drazan, Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer, Representative Tiffany Mitchell, Representative Ron Noble, Representative Rachel Prusak, Representative Mitch Greenlick

My name is Sharon Jones and I am a concerned parent urging you to oppose House Bill 3063. There are currently 31,000 + children in Oregon who would unfairly be discriminated against and denied their right to a public education under this bill. Asking parents to choose between complete mandated vaccination and education is not a choice. It is coercion. It is wrong. It is also ineffective as recent California law has shown. The financial impact to our already underfunded school system could exceed 400 million. That says nothing of the potential impact on the lives of the children themselves.

Did you know that childhood suicide is on the rise? According to the OHA, suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 10-24. That's alarming! As outlined in the OHA 2016 - 2020 Youth Suicide Prevention Plan, social isolation is a contributing factor to suicides. The OHA plan recommends making sure children have a solid peer and community network. Schools are listed as a benefiting factor. We know from a case in Washington, that excluding kids from school raises suicide risk. Imagine then, if all exemption holding students are suddenly kicked out of school, abruptly losing peer connections and school support, and likely facing public embarrassment and bullying. How many of these kids might commit suicide? Suicide is the #2 cause of death in teens in Oregon, which has a higher suicide rate than most of the country. It is likely there will be at least some suicides as a result. Given that we haven't had a death from measles - or even a case of measles spread in schools in many years, it is very possible that more children will die by suicide as a result of this bill than could theoretically be saved.

As stated on the OHA website, "By far, parents in Oregon vaccinate their children". In fact, only 2.6% of children are unvaccinated. Again, according to OHA data, the number of two year olds who are completely up to date on their vaccinations has either remained steady or risen by as much as 8 percentage points, per individual vaccines, from 2014-2017. Our levels of vaccination are at or are many times above what is required for herd immunity per each disease. There has not been a single case of community acquired measles in Oregon during this Clark County outbreak. Not even one. This is yet another indication that our current laws are working to protect our communities without stripping away any freedoms. Freedoms that are set forth in our constitution that you are obligated to uphold.

Medical decisions should be made between patients and their physician. It is a gross overreach of government to interfere in that process. The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons in fact opposes government interference in medical decisions. Doctors would no longer be able to properly assess their patients individual needs and provide the care that is truly best for their patient.

Work towards repealing The National Vaccine Injury Protection Act of 1986. Hold vaccine manufactures liable for the quality and safety of their products. Demand the same true placebo, double blind, controlled studies we demand of any other pharmaceutical product. Allow patients and doctors to make informed choices for their health without interference. Uphold religious and philosophical exemption rights. These are the steps that will make parents less hesitant and more likely to comply with vaccinations for their children in the future.

If this bill passes, children with current non medical exemptions will be negatively impacted. It will however not only be those students and families that are impacted. What about the smaller private and charter schools that will be forced to close when they lose a good portion of their students? What of all those families? What about all the teachers and staff that will now be unemployed? What about the families that lose their second income because their child can no longer attend daycare or school? What about all the lost tax revenue for the state? The total cost is huge! Has anyone looked at what that could actually be?

Please, uphold the right for our children, all children, to have a free public education. If this bill passes, many children will be denied that right. It is unfairly discriminatory. This does not fit with the values and rights of our nation or our state. Our current laws are working. I believe there are other ways to institute policies that could further protect our communities. I urge you to oppose House Bill 3063.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sharon Jones