

To the Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislature,

I am writing to oppose HB 3063. It is a bill capitalizing on the fear from the recent measles outbreak to take away critical choices from Oregon families. I understand it is important for the majority of our population to be vaccinated, in Oregon that has already been achieved. Exemptions are also critical to many families, for either health or religious reasons. Taking away most exemptions will put thousands of families in terrible positions, deciding whether their children's health or education is more important.

My two children did not receive the recommended vaccine schedule, however we are not the ill-informed, "anti-vaxxers" portrayed in the media. My husband and I are both health care providers, we believe in good science. As parents we try to make the best informed decisions about the health and well-being of our children. We have done our research.

Babies have immature immune systems, their tiny bodies are ill equipped to deal with multiple vaccines at once. We chose to wait to initiate vaccinations until our children were over the age of two, when the risk of vaccine injury goes down significantly for specific vaccines. My children also have detoxification and digestive issues, so that puts them at a higher risk of vaccine injury. Their doctor recommended an extended schedule to ensure they could effectively detoxify adjuvants. We wanted to make sure their immune systems could mount an appropriate response (which is the entire point!) We have spaced out the schedule of the vaccines they receive and am grateful to have that choice. We truly believe it has prevented our children from becoming injured.

We have elected to not vaccinate our children for Hep B, since they are at extremely low risk for that disease. Hepatitis B is a blood borne or sexually transmitted disease, the children are at almost no risk for that. We don't believe our children should be exposed unnecessarily to the risks of a vaccine if they are not at risk for the disease it will protect them from. As they get older and their risk factors change, we will reassess that decision, as is our parental right.

Our children attend public school, but because they are not 100% fully vaccinated, we must file a non-medical exemption every year (medical exemptions are very difficult to get, although our doctor believes they should qualify). Our kids are part of the statistics of "non-vaccinated" children, simply because we have elected to be on a slower schedule that is much more appropriate for their health. Please do not take away our power as parents to decide what and when it is appropriate to inject these strong, potentially dangerous medicines into our children!

Another concern that I have is that this rushed bill would force children that are not caught up to receive multiple vaccinations at once. Parents would have to make a difficult decision - whether to subject their children to multiple simultaneous injections, or lose their ability to have childcare or education. This will put many families in a terrible position. Rushing vaccinations is not the way to catch these kids up! Not only is this risky for the health of these children, it does not follow the CDC guidelines of spacing most injections one month apart.

If mandatory vaccinations are going to be put into law, please consider a more health oriented strategy to catch up the kids that are behind. Allowing for exemptions is also important, not all children can receive vaccines safely as infants. The people who ask for exemptions are often informed parents trying to make the best health care decisions they can. It is also important for us to honor those who do not believe in vaccines as part of their religious beliefs. I ask that you consider the many families that this bill will effect. Create better informed laws for Oregon families, please do not pass this bill.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Minifie

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