

To the Members of our State Congress.

I am writing to voice my favor of HB 3063. With the growing epidemic of measles in our community, and the threat of other preventable diseases spreading, it is time for Oregon to take sensible measures to protect our children as they attend school.

While I understand the importance of freedom and bodily autonomy, those who freely decide not to vaccinate are not being stripped of their fundamental rights by this bill. Our nation provides free online education and there are many private schools. And we are not advocating penalties or criminal charges for those who choose not to vaccinate. There is no reason for framing this as a matter of unjustified force or denial of liberty. This is taking responsible steps to ensure that the services provided by our government are ones where risks are eliminated as much as we can and where children can learn without having to worry about school being interrupted by the outbreak of a preventable disease.

It would be a mistake to eliminate risk by eliminating liberty. But we can't forget, that when we allow freedom for things that have the potential to cause harm, like guns or cars, we also have regulations in place to eliminate that risk as much as possible. Freedom comes with responsibilities to adhere to the proper measures to eliminate risk on behalf of others.

There are no such measures required for those who freely decide not to vaccinate against medical advice. As a result, others such as young infants and those with weakened immune systems and medical exemptions for vaccines are at risk.

This is a step in the right direction for them. The science-based and reasonable majority stands behind the effort to require vaccinations for public school attendance.

Thank you for your time.

Paige Foelker