

Submitter: Kelsey Lang
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB42

Dear Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kelsey Lang (97202) and I am a parent writing to you today in support of Senate Bill 42. Vaccines prevent mass outbreaks, eradicate diseases, and ultimately save lives. But right now, access to vaccines is at risk for many across our state.

I care deeply about access to vaccines in Oregon because it makes life for me and my child safer. I have no desire for either of us to experience preventable illnesses and/or death. We are lucky in that we can (and have) driven hours to get the vaccines we need, but not everyone has that option. We've seen recently what a measles outbreak can do.

Oregon's Vaccine Access Program (VAP) is absolutely critical to the health of Oregonians, and right now it is at risk of being significantly underfunded. This kind of massive reduction – currently estimated to be 65-70% of enrolled clinics – will threaten vaccine access statewide and particularly for low-income populations, rural communities, and historically marginalized groups.

This potential funding reduction comes at the worst possible time. Last year, our communities saw the highest number of measles cases in 30 years and the largest pertussis outbreak in the last 50 years with over 1,000 cases. Meanwhile, childhood immunization rates are at the lowest we've seen in Oregon since 2018.

Please take action to protect the health of Oregonians.

Vote yes on Senate Bill 42.

Thank you,
Kelsey