

Submitter:

Thomas Peck

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1598

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 1598 – Relating to access to health services; declaring an emergency

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Health Care Committee,

I am a native Oregonian, writing to strongly oppose Senate Bill 1598. As a parent raising children in this state, I am deeply concerned about the bill's potential impact on my family's health decisions, our parental rights, and our household finances.

Here are my main reasons for opposing this legislation:

1. I don't want an unelected official deciding what medications or vaccines my child receives. SB 1598 authorizes the Public Health Officer—or a designated physician—to issue statewide standing orders for prescriptions related to any "significant public health concern," including immunizations. As a parent, I trust my pediatrician to make recommendations based on my child's individual health history, allergies, and needs—not a one-size-fits-all order from a government appointee who doesn't know my family personally.
2. This erodes my right to give—or withhold—informed consent for my kids. Standing orders could enable pharmacies and providers to administer interventions without requiring individualized discussions or explicit parental consent in every case. I am the one best equipped to weigh the risks and benefits for my children; no single official should override my authority as a parent or interfere with the doctor-patient relationship we've built.
3. It will make health insurance even more expensive for Oregon families. The bill mandates no-cost coverage for an expanding range of preventive services and future immunizations recommended by the Public Health Officer, beyond current federal requirements. Insurers will likely pass these added costs on through higher premiums. Oregon families are already facing steep expenses for housing, groceries, and childcare—further increases in health insurance would make it harder for us to provide for our children.
4. Too much unchecked power in one person's hands is dangerous for our kids' future. The bill grants broad authority with limited legislative oversight, immunity protections, and an emergency declaration for immediate effect. Decisions could be influenced by politics rather than pure science or family-specific needs. As a parent, I need real accountability and transparency to ensure public health policies truly protect children without risking overreach.
5. Medical freedom belongs to families—not the state. This legislation risks turning personal and family health choices into government mandates. I want the freedom to consult our trusted doctor, review evidence, and decide what's best for my family without pressure from statewide standing orders that could limit options or influence

providers. Oregon parents should retain this fundamental right.

I urge the Committee to reject Senate Bill 1598 to protect parental rights, patient autonomy, and affordability for Oregon families. Thank you for considering my testimony and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

Thomas P