

Dear Ms. Salinas,

I have been asked to submit the following for the hearing on HB 3063 by Dr. Brian Kittams. He forwarded me the email with a link to the site to submit testimony.

When I open the site and scroll to the bottom there is no link to "submit testimony".

This is what I would like to submit.

The following is a post I put on Facebook in response to the current Measles outbreak in the Pacific Northwest. I am a retired RN. I spent the first 20 years of my career in Pediatrics, the last 20 years in adult oncology.

Brian Kittams, a pediatrician who has already sent a letter to you, asked me to send this post as well. It is directed towards parents who have chosen not to immunize their children.

What's on my mind is vaccinations. Here, in the Pacific NW, we have exceeded 60 cases of measles because of people, like you, who refuse to vaccinate their kids.

I am old enough to have had a neighbor with brain damage related to measles. I am old enough to have a high school acquaintance affected by polio.

I have been a nurse long enough to have seen infants struggle with pertussis (whooping cough). You have likely not seen it. It is horrible. Babies that cough until they turn blue, vomit and spew stringy mucus stuff that they would choke on if the nurse wasn't there to suction it away. It lasts for weeks. I have been a nurse long enough to see kids intubated in the ICU for days with epiglottitis (the HiB vaccine prevents this)

I have taken care of adults with varicella pneumonia. You think chicken pox is benign? If you are an adult, not so. If you have had shingles (a result of the chicken pox virus lying dormant in nerve roots for decades) you know it can be a painful, years lasting problem.

All these diseases and more can be eradicated with vaccines.

People who choose not to vaccinate do so based on one person's opinion that has long since, and many times over, been debunked.

For many years, you have been protected by "herd" immunity. The more people that are vaccinated, the less likely your child would get the disease.

We live in a time of immunotherapy used to treat cancer, psoriasis, arthritis and other autoimmune diseases. We have scientific advances that allow people stem cell and solid organ transplant. That means that there are many more people who live their lives but are immune compromised. That means that if they are exposed to your child that has measles or other preventable diseases because you chose not to vaccinate for invalidated reasons, they could die.

What you consider choice is unconscionable and irresponsible.

I have heard people call vaccines "poison". Getting the actual disease can be much more poisonous. For the sake of the community you live in and for your own children that are no longer protected by those who have acted responsibly, please vaccinate.

Sincerely,

Cathy Baker, RN, retired.

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