



Oregon AFSCME support HB 3063

Dear Chair Salinas, Vice-chairs Hayden and Nosse and members of the House Health Care Committee,

Oregon AFSCME Council 75 represents nearly 27,000 workers statewide including local public health employees around the state, licensed in-home child care providers and Head Start employees to name a few of our locals whose work is directly impacted by vaccines. In public health, our members are responsible for educating the public about vaccination safety and efficacy, tracking vaccination rates and responding to outbreaks to prevent the spread of dangerous, preventable diseases. In our early learning settings, child care providers and Head Start employees are tasked with making sure that parents and guardians turn in their children's vaccination records and exemption forms. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3063.

Our public health members know that dangerous vaccine-preventable diseases have costly and lasting health impacts on the people in our state, especially for our youngest who are not old enough to be vaccinated and people who are medically vulnerable. The cost goes beyond the impacted individuals' and families' health but also puts a real strain on our already overburdened and underfunded public health system. When outbreaks occur, our public health offices increase outreach and education efforts, and scramble to coordinate with health care practitioners to increase the number of people who are protected.

Our child care and early learning providers, worry that the increases in vaccine exemptions are putting the young ones in their care in harm's way. Many of our family child care providers are caring for children as young as 6-weeks-old, far too young to be vaccinated for pertussis and measles, two of the dangerous and preventable diseases we've seen very recently in the state. A few years ago, one provider had a child that broke out into a rash while at her house. There was confusion about whether or not the rash was chicken pox and the provider quickly pulled all of the vaccination records of the kids in her care, calling the parents whose children had not been vaccinated to let them know of the possible exposure, but that also tests were underway. Fortunately for all involved, it was something far less severe. However, not having the confidence that all who are medically able to receive vaccinations in child care settings creates a level of uncertainty and risk that providers and parents shouldn't have as a concern.

HB 3063 is an important step for protecting the most medically vulnerable in our state by reducing the risk of the spread of life threatening diseases. We strongly urge you to support and pass HB 3063.

Respectfully submitted by Eva Rippeteau, political coordinator, AFSCME Council 75.