

Dear Chairperson Salinas and Oregon Healthcare Committee members,

I am the father of four young healthy children. I understand that with HB3063, you're considering whether to remove the philosophical/religious exemption to mandatory vaccination. It is currently an option for parents who have reservations about whether certain vaccines are beneficial or safe for their particular situations. And, if the bill is voted through, a medical exemption would be the only option for someone to not be vaccinated, in order to go to school. I hope I've summarized this intent properly.

I have no doubt you've already received numerous stories from parents of vaccine injured children, whose lives have been forever altered by their bodies' unfortunate reaction to a vaccine that they were given.

You've also probably received correspondence from quite a few people who object to the proposed change because they feel like you are moving to restrict their constitutional rights to make medical decisions for their families.

There have probably been letters from people who want you to know how the vaccine industry cannot be held liable for vaccine injuries, due to the legislation that was passed in the 1980's or from people who want to point out that the schedule of vaccines has grown exponentially over the last few decades.

While all of these points are important to consider, I'd like to highlight the fact that medical science is ever changing, and that the medical community is currently on the verge of greater understanding of genetics and how specific DNA characteristics can influence how a person's body will react to certain ingredients. There may soon be easier ways to determine who cannot process heavy metals such as the aluminum in many vaccines. If a doctor could determine that someone had a genetic predisposition, a medical exemption would be sufficient. This would be based on science, instead of requiring a prior vaccine injury to prove that someone would be harmed by a particular vaccination, if administered again. As the human genome is better understood and individual characteristics are identified, scientific understanding improves. I have hope that while my children are still young, scientific advances will make it easier for doctors and parents to determine and prove certain genetic predispositions that exist in certain children. The more that we know, the more educated decisions we can make as individuals and as a society. But, we're not there yet.

While it is important to do what we can to protect the general public, it is also important to protect the individual. We cannot force someone who is genetically predisposed to vaccine injury to inject harmful chemicals and other ingredients that their bodies can't process safely. Until we can safely determine who will or will not be injured by vaccinations, it is unfair to require every single child to take that risk.

I oppose HB3063, as it would unfairly punish those who are trying to protect their families from harm.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Jason Hegstad