

My name is Amy Dorr, I live in Gladstone OR. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

12 years ago I thought exactly the same way as many of you do now. I believed vaccines were safe, effective, necessary, and I couldn't really wrap my head around why some people choose not to vaccinate. They're just hippies, I ignored them.

Then my second child had encephalitis after his first shots. Our pediatrician at the time, who we had been seeing for years said "I would think long and hard about ever giving him another vaccine". I asked her about a note for school. She said she wished she could give us a medical exemption, but it would not get approved by OHA. But thankfully, she said, Oregon has non-medical exemptions. I had no idea what a non-medical exemption was, or what OHA was, but I was thankful that we had an alternative that would still allow him to attend school and participate in activities with other kids. A few years later she moved to a practice on the other side of town, and a new pediatrician convinced us to try just one more vaccine. Reluctantly we did, and one dose of MMR again resulted in a severe allergic reaction. After that the new pediatrician also said NO MORE vaccines for him, but again told us he couldn't qualify for a medical exemption in Oregon. We figured it was just us because we thought this is SO RARE. We didn't talk about it much unless someone asked. No one seemed to care, we went about our lives going to school, work, doing homework, extracurricular activities.

All of a sudden in the last few years we've become part of the most hated group in the country. I kind of feel like I'm living in the twilight zone. Now when I tell people about our son, they laugh or tell me I'm lying. Now our average little suburban family is a danger to society. I'm being told if I don't vaccinate my son I'm selfish and stupid, "pro-disease" and trying to kill other people's children. I've been told I'm no better than a terrorist. Why wasn't I selfish or dangerous and trying to kill people 10 years ago?

The good thing about being thrown into this group of "the worlds most dangerous people", is that they are some of the most amazing humans I've ever met. Most of them are just like us. They are trying to protect a child (or some of them more than one child) just like we are. They are knowledgeable, kind, passionate, and even though I'm sad that there are so many families in the same really tough position that we're in, I'm so thankful that I found them.

We're not going away, we're not giving in. I care about protecting the community, but God gave us this child to raise. I was chosen to be his mother, and his protector, and he will always be my first priority, no matter what laws are passed.

Thank you for your time, and for the chance for both sides to share information.

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