

2/27/19

Oregon House Health Care Committee

RE: Opposition to House Bill 3063

Dear Oregon Legislators,

Please register my opposition to HB 3063. I am a mother of two daughters who attend public school. I am deeply opposed to this proposal to limit my rights as a mother to decide what is best for my daughters' health. This is about medical freedom and personal choice. Our state is unique. Abortion rights are protected, as they should be. Doctor-assisted death-by-choice is legal, as it should be. And philosophical and religious exemptions to all or some childhood vaccines are permitted, as they should be. Please do not take away this right. It isn't the Oregon way.

I am concerned about how rushed this bill is. It isn't ethical. I worry the pace of this bill has to do with the media frenzy about the measles outbreak in Washington. An outbreak which has been overblown, quickly contained, and has led to no deaths. Measles cases were initially inflated because some rashes were found to be caused by the vaccine (side-effects), and not wild measles cases. Rushing this bill on the heels of a measles outbreak, without giving fair time for public comment, is playing into the polarizing features of this public debate. Strong leadership should seek to resolve conflict and increase public trust in our government, not the opposite.

I appreciate and share public health concerns about contagious diseases. But the Oregon law is working. The vast majority of children in our state have fully complied with the state vaccine schedule. Less than 2.5% of Oregon kindergarteners are unvaccinated. Most of the 7.5% of kindergarteners who have exemptions, are partially vaccinated. Different vaccines have different rates of effectiveness, different ingredients, and different risks. This is true of individual children and of the diseases, as well. There is an educated argument to be made about considering vaccines individually, depending on the seriousness and prevalence of the disease, the vulnerabilities or allergies of the particular child, and the ingredients or effectiveness of each vaccine. Removing the ability of parents to choose an alternate schedule or to philosophically or religiously object to one vaccine and not another, will push more parents to decline 100% of vaccinations. For example, under the current laws, more children have obtained the measles vaccine than the chicken pox vaccine. This should be in Oregon's best interest. Because government has no business forcing medical care without choice, exemptions are needed for a civil and free society. That's the bottom line.

Parents have no control over how many vaccines are added to the recommended schedule, and many parents have concerns about the huge increase in vaccine requirements for this generation of children. Each vaccine may only have small amounts of adjuvants, such as aluminum or formaldehyde, but who has studied the accumulative effect of so many shots, sometimes several at once? Parents have not seen a large double-blind control-group study comparing fully vaccinated children to unvaccinated or partially vaccinated children. Parents are asking for transparency about the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, the secretive, back-logged "vaccine court" that has paid out over \$4 billion tax dollars to compensate families who have been injured by vaccines. And while parents who don't fully comply with the vaccine schedule get accused of being ignorant and anti-science, it is a fact that vaccinations are not

required by the FDA to meet the same safety standards as other FDA approved drugs and devices. Unlike any other medical product, manufacturers of vaccines cannot be held liable for vaccine injuries. Tax-payers, who aren't given all the facts about possible risks or vulnerabilities, are paying for what should be the manufacturer's liability.

Good public health leadership would insist on a double-blind controlled study, to help depolarize this issue and supply dissenters with information they need to make an informed choice. Good leadership would admit that, while rare, vaccine side-effects and complications do happen, which means vaccines must remain a medical choice. Good leadership would insist that any pharmaceutical products mandated by the government must be held to the same research standards as all other drugs and medications. Good leadership would encourage governmental transparency from the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. Good leadership would insist that tax-payers don't have to pay for injury compensation. I agree that legislators have a role to play in helping to depolarize this issue and keeping the public safe. But forcing vaccinations, barring children from their right to education- this isn't the type of leadership we need. HB 3063 is not the answer to this controversy.

Parents are often blamed and shamed for not fully vaccinating, accused of being uneducated and paranoid. Parents who are out of compliance with vaccines care about public health and they care about their children. They don't want anyone to die from preventable disease, or to be harmed from medical products. We were once shamed for our concern about mercury-based preservatives in vaccines; subsequent studies showed harm from thimerosal, and it was removed from most childhood vaccines. The backlash came before the evidence, and only then, change was made that benefited children. Please, however you think about vaccines, or whatever you decided on for your children, don't let this bill pass. This is medical bullying.

Sincerely,

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