

Dear Representatives,

I am writing regarding HB 3063 which would remove all nonmedical vaccine exemptions in Oregon or would limit citizens' choice in medical care. I so much would argue that we do need to protect our communities and those who could be at risk of contracting diseases because of not being able to take vaccines (like for my sister who is 30 and on dialysis because of an autoimmune condition of Lupus, for babies, who have not yet received their boosters, or for young children who have less immunity). So vaccines definitely are and have been beneficial toward health and eradicating illnesses like polio and other serious diseases. And, it is also significant to note that in Oregon there are only a small number of people who choose not to receive all vaccinations, or that Oregon's unvaccinated rate is only 2.6% (which may mean that only one or two vaccinations were not administered).

While immunizations definitely are important, there are physicians who are on the side of caution and making decisions to vaccinate not as a complete across the board, or black and white, decision, but as also based on what is best medically for individuals. There are a small minority of us who are genetically at risk of developing autoimmune disease (who have autoimmune illness that runs in the family), or whose health very well could be compromised by being administered live, or other, vaccines; and there are even those in the medical community are suggesting that it very likely could be best to limit exposure to vaccinations in these situations or that autoimmune illness could be triggered. Even though there could be medical exemption granted by a provider through the state, it seems so vitally important that independent research be conducted to look specifically at whether people who have autoimmune genetic markers and are immunized are more likely to develop autoimmune illness. Any current exemption through our state would be based upon past research findings or not a full picture of how people at risk for autoimmune illness might be harmed until research is completed to carefully address this question. So if a bill like this were passed, then these individuals who very well could be harmed by having vaccinations likely would not have a choice to forego treatment (or not unless autoimmune illness was already obviously present). While our medical advances are very helpful and beneficial for health overall, it seems so incredibly important to allow for some choice in medical care- some exemptions due to health concerns.

Respectfully,  
Bonnie Lancaster