

Dear House Health Care Committee Members:

Let me start out by saying that I am NOT apposed to vaccines. I do believe that there is a need for vaccines. But NOT all vaccines are good for all people and **I am apposed to legislation that would require all vaccines without the parents choice of exemptions.**

Let me first pose a question. If we are all different, if our lineage affects certain aspects of our bodies, if our blood type, our DNA affects how our bodies respond to different allergens, foods, chemicals, plants, or illnesses, how can we possibly believe that a one-size fits all vaccine will be good for every person? As I have said, I am not apposed to vaccines. What I am apposed to is the belief that every vaccine will help all bodies without side affects, sometimes severe. I am very apposed to vaccines that deal with viruses that are not life threatening or have a high rate of serious side affects. I am apposed to forcing vaccines for sexually transmitted diseases on children. I truly believe that it can eventually harm a bodies natural ability to fight sickness and worry that our sincere desire to end all diseases is creating issues that we are not yet fully aware of.

My personal ideal for vaccines would be that we are able to give them to our children one at time instead of shoving them into their little developing bodies and expecting it not to have an adverse affect on them. My preference would be that if we have concerns over or our children have a bad reaction to a particular vaccine that we have the choice to not have it done and that we not be vilified for it.

I know that people freak out and say that if we all were vaccinated it would eradicate these diseases. My answer? It is not possible to eradicate the flu. There are too many strains and too many mutations. Why would we vaccinate for something we cannot anticipate on the off chance that it will help without thought to the side affects of that vaccine? There are major allergens in the flu vaccine (ie. chicken eggs). What becomes our choice if we have no choice? Fight to get a letter of exemption or our child has a serious and sometimes fatal reaction?

Another thing I hear is the anger when a virus, most recently measles, pops up. Parents get angry because people have not vaccinated their children. First of all, there have been multiple instances in the US of vaccinated people contracting and spreading measles. It does not completely eradicate it and we cannot control it coming in from other countries. Do the vaccines help, yes, but they do not fully contain it. I ask them to please educate themselves a little further before reacting based on partial information handed out by news medias or other angry parents.

However, the biggest reason that I am writing this letter is in regards to the HPV vaccine. According to the CDC website, HPV is most commonly a sexually transmitted disease. My choice is to teach my children abstinence and that they are making lifelong decisions by the actions they do or do not take. This should continue to be my choice. Educating them on all the risks is the way I want my kids to not get an STD. If a parent chooses to take the route of vaccinating for it, then that should be their choice, just as it should be my choice to not vaccinate for it. There are too many instances of severe reactions to the HPV vaccine. Below is copied information from the National Vaccine Information Center, which I might add, is not available on any government warning site for the vaccine:

As of July 1, 2018, 387 claims have been filed to the federal Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) for 14 deaths and 373 injuries that occurred after HPV vaccination. To date, the U.S. Court of Claims has compensated 128 of the 387 children and adults who filed claims for HPV vaccine injuries.⁷³

For example, an HPV vaccine injury claim was filed and awarded by the VICP for Christina Tarsell. Christina was a 21-year-old college student majoring in studio arts at Bard College when she received a series of three Gardasil shots. A talented athlete, artist and honor roll student, she died suddenly and without explanation shortly after the third shot in June 2008. Ten years later, in 2018, the government conceded the case and awarded compensation to her mother for Christina's vaccine-related death.⁷⁴

14 deaths and 373 injuries in the United States alone. And that is only the claims submitted. I'm not willing to take the risk of one of my children being a death statistic simply because someone is scared that their child could possibly contract it and decides to put that fear onto everyone else's shoulders. The possibility of a vaccine reaction this severe is NOT a risk I am willing to take with my children, especially when education and responsibility can take care of that issue for them.

If the freedom cry of women everywhere is "my body, my choice", then why is it not our bodies, our choices over vaccines?

If legislation requires all vaccines with no exemptions you take away the very choice that you are giving to others. Our freedom of choice is firmly grounded in our freedom of thought, research, information, education and for some people, religion.

Informational numbers for Oregon show that the majority of people who have vaccine exemptions have still partially vaccinated their children. They only have exemptions for vaccines that they do not feel are good for their children. We parents who do not desire to give all vaccines to our kids are not crazy. We are not uninformed, uneducated people. The fact is that we are probably more educated on vaccines than most people and we are parents who are constantly informing ourselves and truly care about the affects of vaccines on our children and those we love. We read the literature, weigh the risks and make our choices because we truly want what is best for our children.

There is no one size fits all solution for every vaccine. Please! Please continue to allow us the freedom of choice that is the hallmark of our great country.

Sincerely,

Heather Stewart, Mother of 3

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