

Here is my testimony in opposition to HB 3063.

My name is Heather Amaral, and as a resident of Oregon, I am voicing my strong opposition to HB3063, which eliminates all non-medical vaccine exemptions in Oregon. The government should not mandate medical procedures or infringe on the rights of the people to make informed medical decisions for themselves and their children. Informed consent is the very basis of the ethics of medicine. It is the job of health care professionals to fully explain the risks and benefits of any and all procedures and it is the right of the patient to accept or refuse that recommendation.

In 1986, the US government passed a law called the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act. This law shielded vaccine manufacturers from liability in the case where an individual is harmed by a vaccine. The Act established the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (NVICP) to compensate victims of vaccine injury. As of 2018, the NVICP has paid out nearly \$4 billion dollars to vaccine victims for their catastrophic vaccine injuries, although two out of three applicants have been denied compensation. There are more than 30,000 “adverse events” reported annually to the official federal monitoring program for vaccine safety (VAERS) but experts believe only about 1% of vaccine related “adverse events” are being reported. That estimate would potentially put the actual number of adverse reactions at 3,000,000 annually. There is no such thing as “one-size-fits-all” or “risk-free” when it comes to health care and medicine.

It is often reported that vaccination rates are decreasing around the country, but according to the CDC website this isn't true. It is being falsely stated that Oregon's unvaccinated rate is 7.5%, but according to the Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) own website, the nonmedical exemption rate in 2018 for grades K-12 was **2.6%**. In that same graph, medical exemptions for all vaccines is 0.1%. To enter school in Oregon, a child needs over 20 vaccine doses. If this bill passes, a child missing just one dose of one vaccine won't be able to attend school. Most people that seek out non-medical exemptions are just doing it for one of the diseases or they have chosen to vaccinate on a delayed schedule. Diseases such as tetanus and Hepatitis B are not communicable diseases in a school setting, yet you are proposing to mandate them for a child entering daycare, preschool and kindergarten. School admission is not prohibited for children who are known hepatitis B carriers, yet you want to discriminate against a child not vaccinated against Hep. B, who are not even carriers of the disease. If the point of mandating vaccines is to decrease the spread of “communicable” diseases why are you mandating vaccines for diseases that aren't communicable?

A bill like this sets a very dangerous precedent and there will be no limit on which individual freedoms the State can remove in the name of the greater good. Currently, there are 300 vaccines in development. How many of these will be mandated in the future? How many is too many? 10 more, 50 more, 100 more, where does it end? The reality is, that there are vulnerable children who will suffer severe vaccine reactions, including death. The number of vaccines has more than doubled since the Vaccine Injury Act was enacted. The current schedule has never been fully tested for safety and vaccines are not tested in combination. I urge you to think about how you would feel if the government were forcing you to comply with a medical procedure that you believed to be un-safe and potentially harmful to your children. I encourage you to listen to

parents whose children have suffered vaccine injury. Vaccines do come with very serious risks and where there is risk there MUST be choice.

I understand that vaccines are a charged subject right now, but please do not make this a political issue and one driven by media-fueled fear. Having the freedom to make an informed decision about medical care is a fundamental freedom and human right and is one of the foundations of our society. It is the parent's responsibility to weigh all pros and cons when it comes to any aspect of their child's health and medical care. Parents know what is best for their individual children. Vaccine mandates remove parental discretion and violate the child's right to have an invested legal advocate for their individualized care. People's bodies, genetics, medical histories, etc. are very diverse and medical decisions like this are best left up to parents and doctors in private consultation, just as it's always been done.

By tying vaccination to public education, it either forces families to remove their children from school or it becomes an effective mandate, as most Oregon families have neither the time, finances, nor abilities to homeschool their children or leave the state. No one wins in either of these situations.

I am asking you as a resident of Oregon, a citizen of this country, and most importantly as a mother, to please vote NO on HB3063. Please value our human rights and freedom of personal choice. Please keep philosophical and religious exemptions in place for those families who have made an informed and educated decision to not vaccinate or to vaccinate on an alternative schedule.

I appreciate your time on this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Heather Amaral
Bend, Oregon