

Hello,

I am writing to tell you that I oppose HB 3063, the bill to end all non-medical vaccine exemptions for Oregon schoolchildren. I believe parents should retain their rights to refuse vaccinations without being coerced, and I believe all children should have access to an education regardless of vaccination status.

Only 2.7% of Oregon schoolchildren currently hold a philosophical or religious exemption, meaning that scientifically we already have high community immunity to disease. Therefore, there's no reason to take away parental rights to those using non-medical exemptions.

There are many reasons parents use those exemptions. Perhaps their child has had a reaction to a vaccination that doesn't qualify for a medical exemption, and so they choose to no longer use that specific vaccine, even if they use others. Perhaps they are using a spaced out, delayed, or reduced schedule. They may be a member of a religion (such as Jehovah's Witness), which is morally opposed to the use of vaccination. They should not be forced to choose between their religious convictions and public education they help fund through paying their taxes.

I question whether thought has been given to the children currently holding exemptions. They will need to be caught up with the current vaccine schedule. In many cases that will take a long period of time. What are those families supposed to do in the meantime? Finally, I think about how hard this could be for families that will have no choice but to homeschool. Many families will be forced to go to one income in order for one parent to homeschool. What are the families going to do if they're just making it now with 2 incomes? It will be devastating to those families' financial situations!

There is a lot of gray area that the exemptions allow while still keeping every child healthy and vaccination rates high.

I hope you will not support this bill along with me.

Thank you for reading,

April Filipenko