

Thank you Honorable Chairwoman and committee for holding a hearing on SB 649. I was present at the testimony yesterday and signed up to testify. Unfortunately, time ran out before I had an opportunity to speak. Though I submitted my testimony in advance, I would like an opportunity to resubmit my testimony. Given the testimony that came before me, I wanted to make a few changes from my original intention.

My name is Sonja Grabel and I reside in Beaverton. I am a licensed teacher and a mother of two.

I am the type of person who wants to know the details. When I buy a new appliance, I actually read the manual from cover to cover. When I get a new prescription, I actually read the multi-page packet of info that comes from the pharmacy. I'm a voracious reader of non-fiction and technical text. I have a master's degree and have even conducted my own research. And, many years ago, I was a certified pharmacy technician and can understand technical information about pharmaceuticals. I'm the type of parent who would love easy access to a vaccine package insert. As it stands, vaccines are the only pharmaceutical that do not come with a thorough package insert when administered. As a parent, this makes me suspicious. Why are vaccines treated so differently? I know vaccine inserts are available online via the manufacturer, but they can be difficult to find. Some vaccines are offered in more than one preparation from more than one manufacturer. It can be a challenge to find the right one AND insure you are looking at the most recent insert. Many parents may be interested in seeing the package insert, but have no idea they exist or how to find them.

I'm not against the Vaccine Information Sheet (VIS.) I'm grateful that the federal government has taken the time to make these handy reference sheets and I know that many parents will find them more useful than the package inserts themselves. However, for parents like myself, the VIS is not enough. If I want to compare available brands of a given vaccine to select the brand with the lowest aluminum content, for example, I could not get this information from the VIS, but I can get it from the package inserts.

Please support SB 649 and bring vaccines in line with every other consumer product. Parents who don't want the information don't need to access it. But, it should be easily available for those parents who do. And, please don't underestimate the intelligence and capability of parents, as the OHA director did. Many of us are highly educated and quite competent. I find it a little condescending that OHA thinks that this type of information should be withheld from me because I "might not be able to understand it." Vaccines should not be treated differently than any other pharmaceutical or medical procedure.

Sonja Grabel