

Dear Chair Monnes Anderson and Committee Members:

I am urging you to vote in favor of House Bill 2896 that will ban the use of tanning beds for minors. I am a skin cancer survivor and attribute my melanoma to my use of tanning beds throughout my teenage years.

I was 35-years-old when I was diagnosed with a Stage 1 melanoma on my back. I am a wife and a mother of two children and this news made our world stop as I went through surgery to remove the cancer and testing to see if the cancer had spread to other parts of my body.

It was only by chance that I made a visit to my dermatologist that year. My son had surgery that caused us to reach our out-of-pocket maximum. Since we would not have to pay additional costs, we decided to do additional health screening. I never even noticed the tiny black mole that had grown slightly on my back. I don't know how long it would have taken me before I saw the doctor. Or, how much more the cancer would have spread. The stages of melanoma go from 0-5. My melanoma had already spread below my epidermis layer and was millimeters away from entering my bloodstream and spreading to my lymph nodes. We caught it just in time. My story could have been drastically different.

I regret the years of tanning I did in high school, specifically for vanity reasons. I never once thought it could give me a fatal disease. I was medium skin toned, always tanned easily and never burned and my parents let me go.

I think you can make a logical comparison between smoking and the use of tanning beds- both can cause cancer. Tanning is only growing in popularity and these teens are going to be the young mothers and fathers that are battling cancer in their 30s. I survived my melanoma with a scar down my back, but others are not so lucky.

Please protect our youth and vote yes on House Bill 2896.

Sincerely,

Marta McGuire
Wilsonville, OR