



June 11, 2013

Dear Honorable Members of the Oregon House Rules Committee,

Please oppose SB 132 which completely removes Oregon's longstanding statutorily protected religious exemption to vaccination (ORS 433.267 (1) (c)) and instead inserts a limited personal exemption controlled by doctors and the health department. SB 132 forces a parent to overcome government defined hurdles and use a government issued and controlled form when current law only requires a simple written statement of religious exemption from the parent.

Additionally, SB 132 forces the parent to submit themselves to a lecture by a doctor or state approved health care practitioner about vaccination and obtain their signature on the government form OR to complete a state government defined vaccine education module and obtain and show certification of completion for the exemption to be valid. SB 132 was filed under the false assumption that parents making the decision to delay or decline a vaccine are not "educated" enough on the benefits and risks of vaccination. If these restrictive new barriers are not fully complied with to obtain this new vaccine exemption paperwork, the child will be denied an education.

Bill supporters are trying to deflect criticism by claiming "all parents have to do is watch an online video" but nowhere does the bill limit the education requirement to simply watching an online video and it is not defined anywhere what effort it will take to actually obtain certification of completion of this education. Parents who fully vaccinate in ignorance of the risks of vaccination are not required to receive any education by the state under this bill or current state law. SB 132 was specifically requested by the Oregon Pediatric Society with the intention of making the vaccine exemption process more burdensome on parents. Let's not forget what vaccines mean to the bottom line of pediatricians.

Bill supporters are misleading legislators by misrepresenting vaccination and exemption rates in Oregon to make legislators incorrectly believe more parents are refusing all vaccines. That simply isn't happening. The truth is, there is absolutely no immunization rate crisis in Oregon and there is no valid reason for putting unreasonable barriers between parents and vaccine exemptions. According to the CDC's most recent National Immunization Survey (http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/stats-surv/nis/data/tables_2011.htm), the individual vaccination rates for core vaccines in Oregon are already high and don't justify government restrictions on vaccine exemptions: 3 DTaP – 92.5%, 4 DTaP – 76.6%, 3 Polio – 90.2%, 1 MMR – 90.6%, 3 Hib – 90.2%, 3 Hep B – 85.3%, 1 Varicella – 89.3%, 3 Pneumococcal – 90.2%. The vaccine most refused is the Hepatitis B vaccine and the 4th dose of the DPT vaccine. This slightly lowers the overall high vaccination rate since the overall rate calculated is how many kids have received all doses of all vaccines. Otherwise, Oregon's rates are high. Please Oppose SB 132.

Sincerely,

Dawn Richardson,
NVIC Director of Advocacy