

## Board of County Commissioners

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May 29, 2013

**Sen. Tim Knopp**  
900 Court St. NE  
S-309  
Salem, OR 97301

**Rep. Jason Conger**  
900 Court St NE  
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Salem, OR, 97301

**Rep. Mike McLane**  
900 Court St NE  
H-395  
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**Rep. Gene Whisnant**  
900 Court St NE  
H-471  
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### **RE: Senate Bill 132**

Dear Central Oregon Legislative Delegation:

The Deschutes County Board of County Commissioners are supportive of Oregon Senate Bill 132 which requires parents to show informed consent before their unvaccinated children can enter public schools. This bill is critical to the health and safety of our children and community by increasing vaccinations to create "herd immunity." Currently our under-vaccinated population is vulnerable to infectious disease and devastating epidemics.

In the past decade, immunization exemption rates for children entering kindergarten in Oregon has tripled from 1.9% in 2000 to 6.4% in 2013. Deschutes County's exemption rate has gone from 0.4% in 2000 to 8% in 2013. These are alarming percentages. This high exemption rate puts our community at greater risk for devastating vaccine-preventable diseases. A school or community needs at least a 94 percent immunization rate to keep potentially deadly diseases like measles and whooping cough away from our children. We have pockets of schools in our county with less than 80% immunization coverage. Deschutes County Health Services Public Health supports this bill as an important step in reducing exemptions and protecting our children and our community.

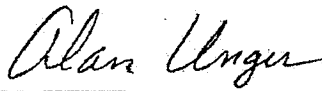
By far, most people in Oregon immunize their children as part of a healthy lifestyle and to keep the entire community healthy; especially those children who can't be vaccinated because of age or medical condition. We want parents to know the risks and benefits of not vaccinating for any reason, whether it be personal, philosophical or religious. It's crucial that parents make an informed decision about immunization, especially when it affects the health of others around

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them. This bill doesn't infringe on anyone's religious rights; it simply gives parents the opportunity to learn more about immunizations and how their decisions affect others.

For these reasons, we support the passage of Senate Bill 132.

Sincerely,



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Alan Unger, Chair  
Deschutes County Board of Commissioners