



Senate Health and Human Services Committee
February 19, 2013
Re: Senate bill 132

Chair Monnes Anderson, Members of the Committee:

My name is Jay Rosenbloom. I am a 3rd generation Oregonian received a PhD in molecular biology and a medical degree from OHSU. I am a full time pediatrician with Pediatric Associates of the Northwest in the Portland area. I am a board member of the Oregon Pediatric Society and the immediate past chair of the Oregon Partnership to Immunize Children.

I appreciate you giving my time to express my support of SB 132.

Immunizations have been one of the greatest advances in public health in history. They are safe and effective at preventing devastating diseases. Currently Oregon has the highest rate of non-medical immunization exemptions for kindergarteners in the entire United States. This high exemption rate could increase the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases, putting our children and community at risk.

Two issues face us as children are not receiving vaccines. One is the danger to individuals. Without immunity, children are left susceptible to deadly diseases like measles (1 in 500 cases result in death). The second issue is the danger to the community as a whole. Most of the infants that die from whooping cough are too young to be vaccinated, which means the way to protect them is by keeping infections like this one suppressed to a level we reduce the risk of them acquiring the disease (also called herd immunity).

Although most parents understand the importance of immunizing their children, the exemption rates for children entering kindergarten has more than doubled in the last decade.

This is not just a theoretical concern. We have a patient in our clinic with very loving and caring parents that decided to pick and choose which vaccines their child would receive, and when they would get them. Needless to say, the toddler developed meningitis from a bacteria that we routinely vaccinate for. He will be left with permanent brain damage due to the infection that was preventable.

I appreciate that parents are trying to do what they think is best for their child. However, when parents do their "research" on vaccinations they seek information online or by word of mouth from friends, leading to a mix of some accurate, some inaccurate, and a lot of incomplete information.

It is the goal of this legislation that any parent that still wants to exempt their child be able to do so, but so with a complete and fully informed consent.

Now that Oregon has reached the worst rate of non-medical exemptions for kindergarteners in the nation, the time has come to help us pass fair and sensible legislation that will promote informed decision-making among parents about immunizations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.