

Dear Senator Arnie Roblan and Members of the Committee,

Subject: SB895

This letter is in opposition to SB895. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlett Letter*, we read and walk through the shoes of Hester Prynne – a woman who is forced to wear a letter “A” around her neck because she had an affair with a town member. Throughout the first several chapters of the book, we see her and her daughter Pearl suffer the wrath, callousness, and hatred of the townspeople. In much the same way as Hester Prynne and her daughter were constantly shamed and bullied by the townspeople of Salem, this misguided bill would do the same for Oregonians who have chosen to abstain from even one vaccination.

If passed, this bill will require school to make public the vaccination exemption rates at each school. And while on the surface that may seem benign enough, what this will surely do is to invade the privacy of individual families and ultimately make public the names of those within each school that have vaccine exemptions. Let us all be clear on something, this bill will potentially infringe on privacy rights under HIPAA and FERPA laws.

It creates discriminatory practices as well. Schools currently do not make public the number of students within each school who have HIV, Hepatitis, or other infectious diseases. Yet this bill would make it mandatory for schools to make public the number of students with vaccine exemptions. Sure, schools will be posting exemption rates, but it does not take a rocket scientist to determine numbers from percentages. Passage of this bill would keep one group protected while branding another; all because informed parents made informed choices on vaccinations for their children.

Mrs. Steiner-Heyward, the sponsor of this bill, stated that this bill will help facilitate “community conversation” about vaccination. If by “community conversation” she means coercion and bullying of individuals who choose not to vaccinate their children, then that is what will happen. Passage of this bill opens the doors to bullying and coercion of parents to vaccinate their children. Students who are not vaccinated will be bullied by those who are. And to think that individual names will not be accidentally published is akin to believing in fairy tales. Parents will be bullied by other parents to make choices they would not otherwise make for their children. If 100% vaccination rates are what Mrs. Steiner-Heyward is after, she will get that through the coercion and bullying that parents will be subjected to should this bill be adopted. Community conversation can and should be created through different means; means that are productive, open to all opinions, and where informed consent and choice are at the forefront. This bill will not create such conversation.

Lastly, passage of this bill is of no use to Oregon taxpayers and ultimately to Oregon's educators and students. How does passage of this bill help in improving the education of Oregon's students? How does it help improve test outcomes? How does it aid

educators in teaching effectively, in becoming better teachers? It does not. What it does is increase bureaucracies, administrative costs, and ultimate creates a negative school environment where learning is impeded.

Please reject this misguided legislation, which would do nothing but brand certain Oregonians with a letter "E", just as Hester Prynne was branded with a letter "A". Oregonians do not need nor want SB895, legislation that discriminates against individuals for upholding their beliefs and rights.

Respectfully yours,

Alex Gonzalez  
Tualatin, OR