

Subject: Amendment to SB895

Reply-To: gretchen vos <oregongretchen@yahoo.com>

To Honorable Senators: I am a mother of a 7 year old boy, a scientist, and a concerned citizen of Ashland, Oregon. I am neither pro-vaccine nor anti-vaccine. As a botanist, I am certainly pro-science. Vaccines are certainly a public health issue. However the senate bill in committee (and the previous one) goes beyond the responsibilities of public health into what appears to be a personal vendetta of the sponsoring senator. That she added in an amendment to 895, at the last minute, tells the citizens of Oregon that Senator Steiner-Hayward is not interested in the democratic process, but wishes to create legislation outside of the public! Shame on her. Shame on any of you who condone this behavior (as common as it may be in the Oregon or US Senate!) I will only address the primary language in 895 related to the documentation of school's vaccinations rates, and I will not address in this email Senator Hayward-Steiner's shameless amendment related to parents ability to get exemptions!

I am writing to ask that you do not support Senator Steiner-Hayward's amendment to this bill related to vaccines. Specifically I feel this is a witch hunt by the honorable Senator Steiner-Hayward. There is no democratic reason to post immunization records/numbers at our public schools. **First, the posting and following of individual children's immunization records is illegal as it falls under the privacy of a doctor-patient relationship. Second, there are many children who have been vaccinated, but their bodies DID not create antibodies to the vaccine-preventable disease. This is a fact, supported by the CDC (i.e. the efficacy of the MMR vaccine for measles is ~ 96%; therefore about 4% of vaccinated children are as unprotected as the unvaccinated children).** Therefore, if we do not test all children for antibodies (a simple "titer" test), then we do not really know which children are actually unprotected and are therefore, in Senator Steiner-Hayward's opinion, a risk to public health. If we do not WANT to make this distinction, then the public can only assume that Senator Steiner-Hayward wants to "out" the unvaccinated, rather than to increase public health. If Senator Steiner-Hayward is not interested in these details, it is quite clear that she has some kind of personal reason for the amendment. I can only wonder if she is mentally stable. A wise Senator leads the state, does not bring in her own personal issues to legislation.

Senate Bill 895 appears to be an act to "out" the unvaccinated children; is this legislation? It seems cruel, vindictive and quite unwise. It harks back to the Civil Rights Era, and farther back to Nazi Germany. What is next? Perhaps, there ought to be an arm band for each vaccine that all children are required to wear? And those children who were vaccinated, but still are unprotected, shall they wear the arm band as well? And what of the children who CANNOT get vaccinated? We do allow medical exemptions; shall these children be included in the vaccination records? Shall they be required to wear the arm band as well? Or maybe we should have GPS implants put in, to follow these children around so we know exactly where each and every unvaccinated child is located? Or a tattoo?

And more importantly, in many of the recent outbreaks of different vaccine-preventable diseases, it was **adults that were either carriers or the initially infected**. Why are we focusing on the school children? What about their teachers? What about the parents?

The issue of vaccines is not a quick, broad brush issue. It is quite complicated. This is why the US Government created the vaccine court. This is why the Merck Manual and all vaccine inserts describe the risks related to vaccines. This is why the Vaccine Court HAS ruled in favor of multiple vaccine-related injuries. **We all acknowledge that vaccines carry some level of risk.** As long as there is risk related to a medical procedure, our democratic nation, our democratic state has allowed parents to choose that medical procedure. Yes, this is a difficult, contentious issue. As vaccines are part of our public health.

However, even with today's "high" numbers of parents choosing to NOT vaccinate, we have extremely high "herd immunity." If we use the *accurate* numbers from the Oregon health board, we have herd immunity at or above what is required by the CDC. SO THERE IS NO NEED to hunt down the unvaccinated families.

Please look in your heart, stand strong, as a wise leader of our great state of Oregon, and do not support SB 895.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Vos

Gretchen Vos, Senior Botanist
Siskiyou BioSurvey, LLC
444 Lit Way
Ashland, OR 97520
home: 541/ 482-2455
cell: 541 /821-8648

"...If you knew you could not fail, what would you most want to do for the world?"