

February 28, 2019

Oregon State Legislature  
Senate Committee on Health Care  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem Oregon 97301

RE: Please support HB 3063!

Sir/Ma'am,

Hello, my name is Torree McGowan, MD, and I am an emergency physician practicing in Central Oregon. I am writing to urge your support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law.

As an emergency physician, I am often the first person to meet patients when they have these vaccine preventable diseases. One little lady I'll never forget was a 4 week old baby. Her parents firmly believed in vaccination, but this baby was too young to have her vaccinations. Her cousins, who were not vaccinated, came to visit the new baby, and brought pertussis, also known as whooping cough. This poor infant coughed until she turned blue, and her heart rate would slow dangerously. Babies this young with pertussis have a very high risk of death because of these uncontrollable coughing spells, which cause their oxygen levels to drop to levels that can be fatal.

I admitted that tiny one to the hospital, for her to struggle for weeks with an entirely preventable disease. I struggled to answer the mom's questions, because I had to be honest with her that yes, if her nieces and nephews had been vaccinated, her baby would likely not be fighting for her life.

I've deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq during my service in the Air Force. I've seen what these diseases look like, which are almost unheard of here because of a strong vaccination program. I urge you to protect our communities. Don't let us become a third world country because of ignorance and unfounded fears.

Right now, Oregon and Southwest Washington are seeing first-hand the effects of the current measles outbreak on individuals, families, our caregivers and our community.

This outbreak was preventable. Those who opt out of vaccinating their children could place other vulnerable members of the population, including infants and those with compromised immune systems, at greater risk for exposure.

Despite what you may have heard, vaccines does not cause autism in children. Scientists at the CDC, the Institute of Medicine and other reputable entities have never found a credible link between the use of vaccines and autism in children. This has been proven time and again, in millions of patients.

Vaccines save lives. Please support HB 3063!

Thank you,

Torree McGowan, MD, FACEP