

## Vaccine Bill Testimony Template

[ON LETTERHEAD if representing an organization or business]

DATE: 2/26/2018

TO Oregon State Legislature, Senate Committee on Health Care

Re: Support for HB 3063

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I am Corinda Hankins MD, a rural pediatrician from Hood River, OR writing to urge your support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law.

I just wrote a letter to the editor of our local newspaper discussing how important vaccines are to our community. I have included a copy of our letter before

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. **Vaccine exemption rates are skyrocketing in Oregon.** Right now, 7.5% of children in kindergarten are unvaccinated, putting us below the community immunity threshold and endangering vulnerable populations. **This isn't about removing choice, this is about protecting those who have NO choice.** Individuals with compromised immune systems, infants, cancer survivors, transplant recipients and many others have no protection against certain diseases. As a conscientious society, it is our responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves by getting vaccinated.

Despite what you may have heard, vaccines do 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. **Vaccines save lives and we are facing a public health emergency today.** Oregon is seeing the impact of high vaccine exemption rates in the Portland area as over 61 individuals have contracted Measles, an extremely contagious disease with devastating effects.

I ask the committee to protect children's lives. Please support HB 3063.

Thank you,  
Corinda Hankins MD

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Letter to the Editor of Hood River News:

One of the first memories I have is one of not being able to breath. The memory is hazy but it is full of fear. I had pneumonia as a complication of measles infection. Although I had had one dose of my measles vaccinations, I had still contracted measles during an outbreak in our community. I spent 2 weeks in the hospital – the first several days they were fearful I would survive. Now as a pediatrician, I see this fear in my patient’s and parent’s eyes when their child is ill.

The recent measles outbreak in Washington and Oregon and even throughout our country has been very hard for the medical community. Telling parents that they should keep their children who are too young to be vaccinated away from all possible areas of infection- including preschools that don’t have a vaccination rate above the level of herd immunity.

(<https://projects.oregonlive.com/maps/vaccination>) I recommend them asking the parents of play-dates if they vaccinate and avoiding those households and friends who do not. Mostly I recommend that their children get the vaccination for MMR and the other vaccinations on schedule in the hopes that it will keep their children stay healthy if exposed despite their parent’s best efforts.

Globally there were 110,000 deaths from Measles or its complications in 2017 alone – most of these in underdeveloped countries that do not have the vaccination rates that our country has enjoyed in the past but is now falling because of these false reports of side effects from the vaccine.

I understand fear – the fear elicited when families read antivaxx websites and articles that are often anecdotal or still use data that has since been found to be faulty. However there are hundreds of articles now on hundreds of thousands of children that show the safety of vaccines including MMR: Go to the CDC , WHO, American Academy of Pediatrics , and American Academy of Family Physician websites for full reviews. There is no conspiracy around vaccinations – just doctors and health professionals trying to keep your children safe and healthy. Please help us and keep us from seeing that fear in parents’s eyes when their child is sick with a preventable disease. Write your legislator and let them know that more than 85% of their electorate want vaccines for all who can and understand their importance in keeping our community healthy.

Corinda Hankins MD