

Dear Members of the House Health Committee,

My name is Elaine La Joie. I hold a master's degree in Applied Physics from Oregon Graduate Institute, and I have worked as a researcher in biomedical engineering and neuroscience. I am writing today to ask you to Oppose HB 3063 regarding mandatory vaccination. All of us are concerned about preserving the public health and preventing the spread of disease. On the surface, requiring everyone to be vaccinated seems like the best way to do this. However, after much study and research, and from our family's personal experience, we have found that not all people can withstand the vaccine schedule and thrive. A small number of children are much more vulnerable to adverse reactions to vaccines.

Our family is one such family, given the genetic variants on both sides of our family. We have had three different practitioners recommend no further vaccines or very limited vaccines for our child. Most people would think that it would be easy to obtain a medical exemption for genetic variants and previous adverse reactions, however it can be almost impossible since most doctors do not know to look for adverse reactions, and those that do know that the OHA will not sign off on a medical exemption except in an extremely narrow set of circumstances.

Thus, it is often the non-medical exemptions that protect families vulnerable to adverse reactions from further harm. Mandatory vaccination laws will not get these families to vaccinate again because the choice is between harm to their child's health versus using public education. As a parent, health choices have to come first. As a parent, the parent naturally knows the child better than any government official.

Withdrawing these children out of school will upset not just these kids but the dollars going to their schools. Homeschooling will rise, but vaccination rates will not go up significantly. What is ironic is that vaccination rates are already high in Oregon—we are close to 96% for the MMR, well above herd immunity, according to the OHA data for K-12. We had four cases of measles, easily contained in Multnomah County. The system we have in place already is working well.

Please do not make parents choose between an education and the health of their vulnerable children. Most of these families wanted to follow the vaccine schedule, and in fact had planned to, until these health concerns arose. Vaccine injury is a reality, and non-medical exemptions are the only means available today to protect their at risk children and keep them in school.

Thank you for your time,
Elaine La Joie
Portland, Washington County