

February 26, 2019

To: Oregon State Legislature, Senate Committee on Health Care

Re: Support for HB 3063

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I am Jennifer Bass, MD, a pediatrician, at Northwest Permanente in Portland, writing to urge you to support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law.

I am deeply saddened by the measles outbreak in our community. This outbreak was preventable. Those who opt out of vaccinating their children place other vulnerable members of the population, including young infants and those with compromised immune systems at risk.

Vaccines save lives and prevent disability. I have seen firsthand tiny infants with pertussis in the hospital, having coughing spasms, unable to breathe, and there is really nothing beyond supportive care to help them. I've seen a child with devastating measles encephalitis. I've cared for babies with rotavirus infection in the ICU, severely dehydrated needing IV blood pressure support. Every year, children in the US will die from influenza infection. Vaccines can prevent these problems.

Vaccine exemption rates are skyrocketing in Oregon. Every week, I see new parents in my office struggling with the feeling like they need to make a choice about vaccination. They want to do the right thing for their baby, and unfortunately, the messages from popular personalities, like Jenny McCarthy, and Facebook are louder than the evidence based messages from the medical community. This isn't about removing choice, but 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 disease. As a conscientious society, it is our responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves by getting vaccinated. Children need to be safe at school.

We are facing a public health emergency today.

I ask the committee to save children's lives and support HB 3063.

Thank you,  
Jennifer

**Jennifer Bass, MD**

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**Permanente Medicine**

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