

February 27, 2019

TO Oregon State Legislature, Senate Committee on Health Care

Re: Support for HB 3063

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I am Laurel Bradford, MD, a board-certified general outpatient pediatrician and fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics practicing in Tualatin, Oregon. I am writing to urge your support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law.

As you are aware, there is a current measles outbreak in Oregon and Southwest Washington that has infected over 61 individuals with this highly contagious disease with potentially devastating consequences. Those infected are mostly children and almost exclusively unvaccinated. This outbreak was a direct result of waning vaccination rates below a threshold of herd immunity and was entirely preventable. Many places in Oregon have similar low vaccination rates, enabled by the state's current law allowing non-medical exemptions. Without intervention, we will continue to see outbreaks of measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

As a pediatrician during this outbreak, I have spent many hours talking with parents who are terrified that their child might contract measles. Fortunately, we have a very safe and effective vaccine to protect children. However, for parents of my most vulnerable patients such as infants and children with compromised immune systems, I cannot offer them this vaccine and they are reliant on the immunity of those around them. As herd immunity wanes, these patients become at greater risk for exposure. Eliminating non-medical exemptions is not about removing choice but about protecting these patients who have no choice.

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 are safe and save lives.

As a pediatrician and a mother, I ask the committee to protect children's lives. Please support HB 3063.

Thank you,

Laurel Bradford, MD

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