

Dear Chairman Salinas and Members of the Healthcare Committee:

I have been a teacher in Oregon for nearly thirty years. I am strongly opposed to HB 3063.

When I first began teaching, I knew just one child with autism, one with seizures (due to epilepsy), and zero peanut allergies. That was in the entire middle school. Today, as a substitute teacher, I routinely walk into classrooms with children with serious health conditions, and children with serious behaviors they have a hard time controlling. Increasing the vaccination rate through mandating vaccines without the possibility of anything other than medical exemptions will not resolve any of the real problems in today's classrooms. I urge you to put your energies elsewhere.

I am deeply concerned for families who do not have the means or educational background to homeschool. Public school is their right, as it is the right of every single child in this state. I've taught children over the years who had previously been homeschooled, and for many families it works out well. But for some, it just doesn't work, even with the best of intentions. Some families will give in, vaccinate, and send their children back to school. But other families will attempt to homeschool when they are not prepared to do so. This will leave us with a portion of our population who have not received a proper education.

There are no current outbreaks in our state to necessitate this legislation. Oregon law already allows unvaccinated students to be excluded until an outbreak is over. There is no reason to permanently exclude otherwise healthy children from their lawful right to be educated in public school.

I value all the students that I am privileged to teach. I value diversity, and differing opinions. I do not value depriving children of an appropriate education.

Sincerely,  
Lois Patterson