

February 27, 2019

To the members of the House Committee on Health Care  
cc: Speaker Tina Kotek, Representative Jennifer Williamson, Senator Ginny Burdick

Re: HB 3063

On December 3, 2018, my father, age seventy, died of scleroderma, an autoimmune rheumatic disease. It was heartbreaking to watch him go from active and healthy to someone who could not breathe without supplemental oxygen in five short years. Before he got sick, I had never even heard of this disease.

According to the Center for Disease Control guidelines for the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine—just updated *last* year—individuals who have siblings or parents with a history of immune system problems should not get the MMR vaccine. I may carry the disposition for scleroderma—it is genetic—and my children may as well. My dad did not get sick until he was sixty-five years old. I could become sick in the future, but I cannot now get a medical exemption for my two young children. My example is just one illustration of the complications that arise from a standardized, one-size-fits-all approach to medicine. And it is one reason that I, as a lifelong Democratic voter (HD-36, SD-18), strongly oppose HB 3063.

I am not anti-vaccine, but I am opposed to eliminating choice in personal medical decisions. Forcing a single, uniform vaccination schedule upon families is an inappropriate intrusion of the legislature into every well-child visit a parent has with his or her pediatrician from birth until age eighteen. We have two daughters, ages five and nine, and have had many conversations with our pediatrician about the timing, safety, and efficacy of vaccines. This bill not only strips parents of their rights, it takes away parents' role as partners with their doctors in the responsibility for their children's health care. By removing parental choice regarding childhood vaccines, politicians are crossing a line into health care decisions endemic to the relationship between an individual and his or her physician.

Though we have vaccinated our children, we have not followed the CDC's specific schedule of eleven vaccinations and thirty-six-plus injections. We are on a delayed and selective schedule that we believe is right for our family. Statistics referenced in the debate about vaccinations include our children as "unvaccinated." This is simply inaccurate—we've followed a schedule that differs from the CDC. This blanket label gives a false impression, effectively over-representing the number of children in Oregon that are unvaccinated

I am a lifelong progressive voter, but I never thought a Democratic supermajority would cavalierly take away my right to choose. I believe in enacting laws that protect the common good. I believe that vaccines are critical to overall public health. But I do not support HB 3063.

This historic supermajority needs to focus on the priorities: climate change, housing the houseless, expanding health care benefits. The legislature has suffered this session from allegations of harassment and incivility, and legislating away the rights of the minority, no matter how easily mocked or minimized, is un-American.

The number of people who choose an alternative vaccine schedule or are against vaccines is very small. It is un-American to take away this minority's rights: to make informed health-care decisions for their children, to give their children an education (home school is not an option for most working parents). Democracy requires that a minority's basic and inalienable rights must be protected, particularly in the case of supermajority rule. Otherwise we are no different than the autocrats.

Please don't schedule HB 3063 for a work session, don't force all legislators to vote on an issue that divides the base that elected a Democratic supermajority. Do not force a single one-size-fits-all-children approach on medical choices that belong with families.

Sincerely,

Tara Rae Miner

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