

Dear Madame Chair Andrea Salinas and members of the House Health Care Committee,

I am writing in opposition to HB 3063. As an Oregon resident, and constituent, I have serious concerns about restricting a child's access to education or licensed childcare based on vaccination status. As a mother of two school aged children, my family has made the personal decision to fully vaccinate according to the current recommendations. However, I do not consider myself pro-vax or anti-vax. I am pro-educated vaccine choice.

Every medical procedure, including vaccination, comes with inherent risk. I understand how vaccines work and I understand herd immunity. I have friends with immunocompromised children who are incapable of being vaccinated. While I am fully aware of the potential medical risk of not vaccinating, I still believe that every parent should have the right, with their doctor, to weigh the risks of non-vaccination against the risks of vaccination given their own family medical history.

My personal religious beliefs have not prevented me from having my own family vaccinated, but I know that there are families with religious beliefs that do prevent them from receiving certain vaccinations. I find it discriminatory and unfair to exclude those children from public education and other services due to vaccination status.

In addition to public school buildings, this bill will also exclude children from daycare facilities and many online education options. Many families cannot afford to have a parent stay at home with the children. Creating this policy of exclusion will force some families to get vaccines for children who may have higher than average risk, or that goes against their right to religious freedom.

In addition, this bill would exclude any child not adhering to the standard recommended vaccine schedule, which is subject to future changes. In the last 15 years, 5 unique vaccines and 35 additional doses have been added to that schedule. Vaccines are not held to the same safety standards as other medical devices and products. There are not double-blind placebo-controlled studies, and most vaccines have not been in use long enough to fully study their long-term effects. As new vaccines are developed and added to the recommended schedule, parents with legitimate safety concerns will be forced to either allow their children to be the "guinea pigs" for these new vaccines or find a way to be home with their children. This is an overstepping of bounds by our government, and a stripping of our personal freedom of choice.

While I understand the reasoning behind this bill, I believe it to be based on fear more than facts. Many exempted children have received some vaccinations, and the rate of fully unvaccinated children is actually very low. Only 2.6% of K-12 students are unvaccinated. The current measles outbreak has resulted in only one hospitalization, zero deaths, and zero exposures in Oregon's public schools.

I urge you to consider the facts and then vote 'no' on this discriminatory bill.

Sincerely,

Karon Springstead
Salem Resident, Registered Voter, and Concerned Parent