

Testimony in opposition to HB3063

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Greetings,

We are Oregon residents, business owners and employers of 28 years and the parents of two children, aged 12 and 17. We are opposed to HB3063, which would eliminate religious and philosophical exemptions for admission into all K-12 schools in Oregon.

We have pragmatic concerns about the long-term effects of this mandate, and question what issues it proposes to solve. Considering that vaccination rates in the state of Oregon are well above the range considered necessary by those seeking vaccine-induced herd immunity, is this mandate necessary? Vaccine uptake percentages were well below 80% during from the 70's through the 80's and there were no serious disease outbreaks during that time. They are over 90% now. Why is this mandate viewed as necessary now? Certainly not in the interest of public health, as it is presented to be. Most outbreaks of the two diseases of highest concern, measles and pertussis, have been self-limiting for decades.

From a logistical perspective, the implementation of this mandate would leave many thousands of children without means for an adequate education, as required under federal law. How is this going to be handled? How will a family without an adult home during the day manage homeschooling their child? Will the child benefit or suffer under such circumstances? What will happen to children with IEP's? Will they have services provided if they are not fully compliant? What will be the legal ramifications of this? If all children attending school are fully vaccinated or medically exempted, what will be the status of all others present? Teachers, administrators, coaches, volunteers, aides, bus drivers and etc. Will they also be mandated to be fully compliant with the vaccine schedule? Is there provision for shortages that may arise from such a scenario? It seems that Oregon already has a fairly severe shortage of teachers and staff, and of course volunteers are always in short supply.

Every family that opts to homeschool will reduce funding for their local school district. Is there a provision for managing the schools under this shortfall? Will homeschooled children be provided with tutors or ES's if needed or requested to ensure they are being adequately educated? How will this mandate affect the education level of Oregon citizens? How will it impact businesses seeking future employees? How will this potential reduction in education affect choices made, future earnings potential, and the future tax base for the state? How will this affect the competitiveness of Oregon's young adults for good jobs, how will it affect their future quality of life?

Most importantly, how will this impact the Oregon populace, how will it affect the cohesiveness of communities, if citizens are divided, basically into to classes, with two different sets of rights and two different levels of access to public places and government-provided services? Will this create a sense of common good, or will this codify separation, segregation and division? And will that be a benefit or detriment to our State and its citizens?

Once again, what problem is this bill actually trying to solve?

