

From: [Laura Casey](#)
To: [HHC Exhibits](#)
Subject: Support for House Bill 3063
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Oregon State Legislature

Senate Committee on Health Care

900 Court St. NE

Salem Oregon 97301

RE: Please support HB 3063!

Hello, my name is Laura Davies and I am a medical doctor (rheumatologist) & a mother writing to urge your support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law.

As a rheumatologist, I take care of patients with autoimmune diseases (like rheumatoid arthritis & lupus) who require lifelong immunosuppressive drugs to control their diseases. While on these medications, there are certain live vaccines (including MMR/measles or Zostavax or Yellow Fever) that are not safe to receive and they do not mount as strong a response to other vaccines (including the annual flu shot). In addition, their immune systems are suppressed to the degree that they are unable to fight off all infections (common & rare) as easily as people with normal immune systems. In light of the recent measles outbreak in the Vancouver/Portland area, these individuals and providers (like me) have been dealing with significant fears about the potentially fatal outcomes if they are exposed to infections like measles, infections that we have the ability to eradicate with safe vaccines and herd immunity. Since these autoimmune diseases can present at ANY age of life, many of my patients are also parents to young children. My patients and their families rely heavily on public health efforts that protect us all.

As a mother of an elementary school child, I am pleased that we have done what we can as parents to protect our child, but I also know that vaccinations do not offer 100% protection for all. For example, children have a 97% chance of being fully vaccinated after receiving both of their MMR vaccines. According to public records, in my child's school of around 445 children, there are 20 families who have elected not to vaccinate their children (non-medical exemption). For the remaining 425 vaccinated children, about 12 are not actually immune to MMR despite receiving the vaccines. That means that over 30 children are not immune to measles, and if one child comes to school with active measles and these other 30 children eat in the same cafeteria within 2 hours of the index child coughing in that room, they may all get it. That would be one lunch day cycle.

Since my child's best friend is unable to obtain live vaccines (like MMR) for medical reasons (encephalitis as a baby), his parents have been very concerned recently. They are avoiding public areas, including church. This friend also has a little brother who is too young to have received both of his MMR vaccines. Thus, if one of the children in this family is exposed to measles, then they are both likely to contract it. It is hard to watch this family worry about something that should be eradicated by effective immunization practices.

At my office/clinic, one of the financial coordinators has a baby under the age of 1 who had health issues after birth including seizures that prevent her from receiving certain vaccines, like MMR. Even though my co-workers' husband is the pastor of their church, my co-worker and her two daughters stopped attending church (or going to other crowded public areas) during the measles epidemic in their efforts to protect their two daughters. This is an isolation that is a hardship and should not be necessary.

As a scientist who understands the rigors of research and evidence-based medicine, I am very troubled that the minority of citizens who refuse vaccines based on unfounded fears of autism/other complications have created a situation that places our community at a great risk that we do not need to face in this age of safe medical practices. Despite what some people claim, vaccines does not cause autism in children. Scientists at the CDC, the Institute of Medicine a other reputable entities have never found a credible link between the use of vaccines and autism in children.

For children attending Portland Public Schools, paid for by voting, taxpaying citizens of our community, I believe that

-All children have a right to be safe at school. Children who can't be immunized or those who are immunocompromised are less safe when classmates are unvaccinated. The choice of a parent to not vaccinate their child puts other people's vulnerable children at risk without their knowledge or consent.

-This is a similar right to the right to be safe from weapons in school.

- Eliminating personal belief vaccine exceptions for children attending public school would not take away parents' choice about how/when to vaccinate. Parents would still be permitted to delay some vaccines or give them on an alternative schedule if they feel this is best as long as they are fully vaccinated before entering kindergarten.

-Children who can't receive one or more vaccines for medical reasons would still be exempt.

This current outbreak of measles in Southwest Washington and Metro Portland area was scary...and preventable, and I hope that we use this experience for good and reduce the

likelihood of future public health emergencies.

If we don't act now, the next outbreak of a preventable disease could be even worse.

Vaccines save lives. Please support HB 3063!

Thank you,

Laura Davies, MD