

February 28, 2019

TO Oregon State Legislature, Senate Committee on Health Care

Re: Support for HB 3063

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I, Sarah Green, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland, Oregon, am writing to urge your support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law.

Right now, Oregon and Southwest Washington are seeing first-hand the effects of the current measles outbreak on individuals, families, our caregivers and our community. I have been affected by this in three separate but connected ways.

First, I am a pediatrician. I know the devastating effect preventable diseases have on children and families and I am so angry that this is an ongoing issue. There is simply no excuse for not immunizing. Science has proven that vaccines are effective over and over again. Vaccines are safe. They save lives. They protect those who cannot be protected on their own including the very young and the immunocompromised. The argument that it is a family's right to choose is short cited and simply unfounded. The consequences of not vaccinating are simply too big to ignore. Just as we expect citizens to respect seatbelt laws and drive the speed limit, we should expect citizens to work with doctors to protect our communities against preventable disease.

Second, I am a step-mom to children whose biological mother does not believe in vaccines. I love my step-children as my own and would do anything to protect them from harm. I want them to grow and thrive and be healthy. Over the last 2 years I have fought and fought for permission to vaccinate them. I have won some battles and lost others. I have gone to couples counseling, family counseling and individual counseling to help me strategize and cope with this disagreement because I feel that strongly. It is the number one conflict in my home because, as a pediatrician, I know I am not providing the best, safest care of the children I love. The fact that their mother can sign a non-medical exception is unacceptable.

Thirdly, I am a mother. I have a 5 month old son. I took him to get his first set of vaccines on the day he turned 6 weeks which is the earliest age they are approved for. I felt so confident and good about this choice and was so grateful I have the opportunity and access. He cannot yet be vaccinated for MMR which is currently in our community. I have not taken him to a public place in over 7 weeks because of the recent measles outbreak. It is isolating, inefficient and infuriating to not be able to take him out. I go to the grocery store at night when my husband is home, have rearranged childcare over and over again to avoid him having to be on the bus or in settings with other children who could be unvaccinated. We have cancelled trips and outings and chosen to

stay home, all because people who have the opportunity to get vaccinated chose not to and we are seeing the dangerous consequences. We have not been to any of his sisters' school or sporting events, have missed family gatherings and have essentially been home since the first news of the Washington measles outbreak. While all the inconvenience is time consuming and a stress on our family, I have seen what measles can do to children and I will not take any risks for my son.

Please help us protect our communities and our children.

I ask the committee to protect children's lives. Please support HB 3063.

Thank you,

Sarah Green, MD

Assistant Professor, Pediatrics

Associate Program Director

Pediatric Residency Training Program

Oregon Health & Science University

Doernbecher Children's Hospital