

Representative Salinas and members of the committee,

We're Ben and Autumn, we have children, and we work in education and health care in Klamath County. We oppose HB 3063 on the basis that it overtly threatens two sacrosanct pillars of our society: individual autonomy and parental rights.

All concerns about epidemiology, the safety and efficacy of vaccinations, and the ability of public health officials to properly educate the community aside, this bill as written makes an emergency declaration where no emergency appears to exist in order for the Oregon Health Authority to exert unneeded control over which children get educated in our state's taxpayer-funded public schools.

In addition to creating an additional burdensome layer of regulation on our school districts and public health authorities, this measure appears to be a fearful reaction that aims to grant tremendous control over children's bodies, health, and education to those in public health instead of where that control has historically functioned best - with parents and the educational institutions that serve them. This bill also has the unintended consequence of diverting the finite time and energy of those working hard in public health. Instead of mitigating true health emergencies and providing health resources and education to all Oregonians, helping our residents make the most informed health-related decisions for their families, they will also be serving as both judge and jury in cases of access to public education.

As written, HB 3063 allows the Oregon Health Authority to decide which immunizations are required and when they are required to be administered. It is not confined to the current immunization schedule and is overreaching in its attempt to mandate immunizations or to punish those who can not consciously assent to immunizations by withholding a state-funded public education. This undermines the ability of parents to decide, with their physician, which immunizations they desire their children to receive, eroding their ability to make autonomous, informed decisions on behalf of their children. It also endangers one of the cornerstones of modern biomedical ethics, informed consent. Consent can not be given willingly and from an informed and educated position when a procedure is made compulsory or when consent is garnered due to fear of exclusion or a negative ramification. In a free Republic where any risk exists, regardless of the likelihood of that risk, there must be choice.

Finally, as well-intentioned as this measure may be, it appears to us to be created in fear rather than logical consideration and with disregard of individual freedoms. The results would be a reactionary and fear-based approach to health, education, and governance, and we do not believe that is the way Oregon wishes to operate. In their recommendations to the House we encourage the members of this committee to thoroughly consider the far-reaching and lasting ramifications of HB 3063, to not be reactionary or motivated only by short term gains, but to be contemplative and to truly understand the larger cost to Oregonians' health, education, and personal freedoms.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to this committee. We are open to questions if you have any for us. We appreciate your efforts to make Oregon a great state in which to live, and we trust you and your fellow legislators will uphold parents' and children's' unalienable, individual rights to self-autonomy.