

DATE: March 1, 2019

TO: Oregon State Legislature, House Committee on Health Care

Re: Support for HB 3063, ending non-medical vaccine exemptions

I am a pediatrician and a father to two young children. I support HB 3063.

Since the start of the current measles outbreak, I have seen in my Tigard pediatrics clinic countless families of infants who are anxious for their babies. They are staying home, avoiding crowds, passing on play dates and birthday parties, because they fear their baby - who is too young to get the measles vaccine - could be the next measles case.

While being justifiably fearful and anxious, they are also irate. Measles - thanks to the vaccine - was eliminated from the US in the year 2000. Its resurgence is made possible by parents choosing not to have their kids vaccinated. For the tremendous majority of parents who choose to vaccinate, who trust in the science that demonstrates vaccine safety and effectiveness, who are relieved when their children turn one year old and can be immunized against measles; for them, it is outrageous that they now have to fear a disease that was once eliminated.

I have a few patients' families who have chosen not to vaccinate, and many more who follow an alternative or delayed schedule. At every opportunity, I counsel them on the safety and efficacy of vaccines. I know that every parent wants what is best for their child, so when a parent says yes to vaccines, I want them to feel good about the decision. Many of these families have changed course and decided to get their kids caught up on immunizations.

By eliminating the non-medical exemption, HB 3063 will help both groups of parents - and every child who is either too young or vulnerable to be immunized. When we decide as a society that every child should be able to go to school without fear of contracting a vaccine-preventable disease, we strengthen our communities and we reduce unnecessary fear, anxiety, and stress. When we are not battling to contain and treat diseases that should not exist, we can use those resources to improve our schools and enhance our communities.

I urge you to pass HB 3063, to protect our most vulnerable children, to make schools safe, and to strengthen our Oregon community.

Thank you,

Peter Reed, MD MPH FAAP

Portland, Oregon (residence)

Tigard, Oregon (practice)