

Good Afternoon Chair Salinas and Members of the House Health Care Committee,

We understand that you will be discussing HB3063 this afternoon at 3 PM. When discussing possible amendments to HB3063, please consider the following:

- Although vaccination is a priority, EDUCATION should always come first.
- Isolating pre-teens and teenagers, and prohibiting them from attending school, will lead to depression and take a severe toll on mental health. Oregon already has a VERY HIGH TEEN SUICIDE RATE. Please do not do anything that could add to this already staggering issue of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts in our youth.
- The concern seems to be centered around the exemption rates of new kindergarten classes. The easiest way to fix this and keep kids in school? ESTABLISH CHECK POINTS LIKE CALIFORNIA DID! REQUIRE UP TO DATE RECORDS TO START ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OR TO START MIDDLE SCHOOL. Non-medical exemption rates in middle/high schools are extremely low.
- DO NOT MAKE THIS BILL EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. Start with the 2019-2020 school year.
- Alternatively, only mandate for schools where non medical exemption rates, for any given vaccine, are greater than 5%. The goal is keeping vaccination rates for all vaccines at greater than 95%.
- Establish a different process for adding vaccines to the school schedule. Oregon currently requires more vaccines than most other states.

In the words of Oregon's IPAT, several years ago, EDUCATION SHOULD NOT BE A SWORD. Please prioritize vaccination *AND* education.

Respectfully,
Jeff and Sophia Mekkers