

Submitter: Amelia Barton
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB1529

I'm a parent, long time Democrat, and Oregon citizen to plead with you to vote NO on SB1529-A Engrossed.

This bill was completely re-written to give overreaching and ultimate power of declaring a state of public health emergency to a single un-elected official in Oregon - the Director of the OHA.

The summary of the bill is now deceptive as it doesn't mention additional power given to the Director of the OHA and it scraps the original intention of the bill (ID for Sudafed purchase).

As written, there would be no need for the Governor to make the determination about an actual public health emergency, granting the unelected Public Health Director the ability to make this declaration on a whim without important oversight.

The Director could, in one fell swoop, determine that "there exists a disease outbreak, epidemic or other condition of public health importance, statewide, or in a specified geographic area of Oregon."

The core of a constitutional democracy is a system of checks and balances between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. These checks and balances protect freedoms, and human rights.

My top concerns:

1. There are no clear conditions as to what would warrant a matter of "public health importance." This wording is vague and lends itself to potential abuse.
2. The bill does not define what is considered a state of emergency - how long the emergency can last - or what the criteria would be to step out of the emergency. This language also sets the bill up for abuse and misuse.
3. The public Health Director at OHA is not an elected position. No single person should have absolute power and authority over all people of Oregon.

Tyrants and Dictators use public health "emergencies" to gain power, and ultimately commit atrocities against their own people.

This bill is putting Oregon on a fast track to authoritarian rule by "Emergency Order" and public health crises by an unelected official.

Even leaving this to the Governor ONLY to declare a Public Health Emergency without limits nor checks and balances from the legislature is also non-democratic, especially when all impacts, cost/benefits are not considered (economic, health and other impacts outside of cases, hospitalizations, etc.).

Today is President's Day - Let's use today to protect our democratic process and freedoms.

Please -- Vote No on this deceptive, outrageous, and dangerous bill (SB-1529-A Engrossed).