

Good Afternoon, Chairman Weisz and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Dr. Liann Hanson and I am a principal at Centennial Elementary with Fargo Public Schools. I taught for 5 years and have been a school administrator for 16 years. I have been a principal in the state of Colorado, Minnesota, and North Dakota. I have seen different vaccine regulations in different states and districts. I am here today testify in opposition to House Bill 1320.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has put the spotlight on schools and the importance they have in keeping our community safe and healthy. All schools and districts have done an admirable job in implementing safety measures to keep our students and staff safe. I believe we have played an important role with the mitigation of COVID 19 in our communities and our state.

We have adjusted learning models (from distance learning to hybrid, to 4 or 5 day in person). Teachers, staff, and students have tackled online learning. We have put podding of students into place. We have adjusted where and how students eat lunch. We have limited the number of students that are outside at recess at a time. We have taken extensive time to contact trace, communicate with parents, and send students home to quarantine. We have required face masks and we have social distanced to the best of our ability. All these measures were important to make sure we could stay as safe as possible.

We are finally seeing the light at the end of this COVID 19 tunnel. We are seeing progress in getting all students back to a normal school day. We are meeting the needs of students academically, socially, and emotionally. It would be a detriment to have to worry about other preventable diseases. If we did not require vaccines, there is potential that these diseases could infiltrate our community and we would need to put into place mitigation strategies (again) in our schools. This is a disruption to the education of our students.

It is important for the school districts in the state of North Dakota to continue to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all students. One way we can do that is to oppose House Bill 1320 and to continue to require the appropriate vaccines for our students.

We need to have in place requirements for vaccines for preventable diseases such as pertussis and measles. If we don't, we could potentially have another outbreak that affects our schools and community.

We need to keep kids safe and in school. Vaccines and proper regulations of vaccines is the appropriate way to mitigate risk and keep kids healthy.

I appreciate you taking the time to listen to my testimony. Thank you for serving kids and serving the state of North Dakota.