

Members of the Committee,

Again, I am Melyssa Howry, from New Town. I am going to address this from a different angle, as I have already submitted other testimony regarding vaccine safety and efficacy for the other two bills being heard today. Please know that I consider both of those testimonies to be relevant to all of the bills in this hearing today. I am in support of HB1320, however I would like to suggest language in addition to what has already been adjusted. My suggestion is in regards to homeschoolers. Currently in the state of North Dakota, homeschoolers are required to submit immunization records and/or exemption forms along with letters of intent to homeschool. As other written testimony has stated, immunizations are required for attendance in a public school setting, because of gathering daily with a large group of other children and adults. However, homeschoolers are almost never in the public school setting. The state that I am previously from, New Hampshire, does not require any medical information to be provided for homeschoolers. This information is private and irrelevant, as I previously stated. I believe it's unnecessary and therefore, further amendments should be made to exempt homeschoolers from needing to provide this information to public schools.

Another point I would like to make is that requiring immunization records does not prevent the spread of disease. Children might be up to date on certain vaccines, but there is still a possibility of outbreaks in school settings. In fact, there are several instances throughout the country of pertussis and measles outbreaks, in mostly or even fully vaccinated groups. This is due to the fact that the measles vaccine does not provide lasting immunity, as I can personally attest to. I was tested for immunity when I was pregnant with my first child, and was found to have none, even though I am fully vaccinated. My mother also was informed that she is no longer immune to the measles, either. I have heard this same information from many other adults who have had their bloodwork done to test for measles immunity.

Something similar is true of the pertussis vaccine. While it is advertised as being important for adults to get a pertussis shot in order to be around newborns and young children who cannot yet receive the shot, this is misleading. Research in the past few years has discovered that the pertussis vaccine, similar to what has been discovered with the Covid-19 vaccine, only masks symptoms for the person who received the shot, but will not prevent them from contracting and spreading pertussis. In fact, it makes them more likely to spread the illness to someone who is vulnerable, because they will not have the tell-tale symptoms, such as a cough or fever, that would lead them to avoid leaving the house. Instead, they will freely move about, believing they are "protected", when in fact they could truly spread a dangerous illness to an infant or other immune-compromised individual.

Here is an article highlighting one such incidence in our country within the past two years. This is a key quote:

"Forty-six students have been diagnosed with pertussis at Harvard-Westlake, where enrollment is about 1,600. Eighteen students there have not been

vaccinated against pertussis, but none of them has caught the illness, school spokesman Ari Engelberg said.”

<https://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-ln-whooping-cough-vaccine-20190316-story.html>

Those who did not receive the vaccine did not contract pertussis at all. While we don't know the reason for this, it does present the possibility that unvaccinated individuals are not necessarily the drivers of the spread of illness. There are other factors, which need to be studied further. If people contract natural pertussis, they are immune for life, and therefore provide true protection. If they are vaccinated, they can possibly be protected from the severe symptoms for a few years, but can still spread the infection to others.

The next document I will submit as written testimony is the study on how pertussis can still be spread after vaccination.

In conclusion, I believe that these discussions should happen. Whether or not this bill passes, the conversation is an important one. Please hear the public, those who have experienced these things first hand. Many experts will weigh in, almost always in opposition to any bill regarding medical freedom. Please ask yourselves, why is that? What do they have to gain from giving people the freedom to make their own choices in regards to their own bodies? How do you personally feel about people being forced to put something into their bodies with which they have medical, philosophical, and/or religious objections? Speak with your constituents before dismissing these bills, I plead with you. Ask us what we think. You will find that these issues are important to many of us. Please do your own research before you make a decision. I am happy to chat with any of you further on this subject or on any of the other bills I submitted testimony for. Thank you for your time and consideration!