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Honorable Members of the Senate Hearing Committee,

I am Dr. Parveen Wahab, a board-certified pediatrician and a committed advocate for children's health in Bismarck, ND, for the last 11 years. I am writing to strongly oppose House Bill No. 1457, which would broaden exemptions to vaccine requirements in North Dakota.

1. Protecting Public Health

As a pediatrician, I witness daily the life-saving impact of vaccines, which prevent diseases such as measles, mumps, and whooping cough. Broad vaccine exemptions risk eroding our community's herd immunity. This vulnerability is especially dangerous for infants, immunocompromised individuals, and others who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.

2. Trust in Scientific Evidence

Numerous rigorous studies and decades of clinical experience confirm the safety and efficacy of vaccines. The criteria outlined in HB 1457 may undermine public confidence by promoting misconceptions about vaccine safety. This could further fuel vaccine hesitancy and jeopardize the health of our communities.

3. Economic and Social Costs

Outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illnesses carry a heavy financial burden, from hospitalizations and medical treatments to lost work and school days. Our healthcare system is already under significant strain; preventable disease surges would only add to that pressure.

4. Call to Action

I urge you to oppose HB 1457 and instead support initiatives that reinforce immunization

programs. Maintaining robust vaccination rates is essential to safeguarding North Dakota families and upholding our state's commitment to evidence-based healthcare.

Thank you for considering my perspective. I am available if you have any questions or wish to discuss further. I appreciate your service to our state and dedication to protecting public health.

Sincerely,

Parveen Suhara Wahab, M.D
Pediatric Hospitalist
Chair, Department of Pediatrics
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