

Chairman Weisz and the House Human Services Committee,

My name is Melyssa Howry and I respectfully submit testimony in STRONG OPPOSITION to HB1469, which would place requirements on parents who are claiming philosophical or religious vaccination exemptions for their children, regardless of where they attend school (public, private, or homeschool). My reasons for this are:

1) A religious or philosophical exemption is personal and private. The state of North Dakota, particularly the Department of Health, has no place stepping in and dictating how a parent uses such an exemption.

2) Homeschooling parents, such as myself, should not be required to submit vaccination status of their children in the first place. North Dakota is one of only five states in the US that require immunization records for homeschoolers. The other four are Minnesota, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee:

(<https://kidskonnnect.com/articles/a-full-breakdown-of-the-homeschool-laws-by-state-what-do-you-need-to-be-aware-of/>). In my opinion, Section 1, line 10 of this bill which states “or be supervised through home-based instruction” should be completely removed, in addition to all of the suggested changes that HB1469 presents. The fact that the form must be submitted for homeschoolers who aren’t even in contact with children in the public school setting is already a violation of privacy. This would take that one step further, by hindering a parent’s ability and right to freely discern which exemption they deem necessary and appropriate. Anytime the government takes away a parent’s right to decide what is best for their child, even in a seemingly small way, it is a step in the wrong direction.

3) The majority of parents who use philosophical or religious exemptions have a particular reason, and have done their research. Most people spend hours and hours already reading everything they can, on both sides of the issue. It is not a decision made lightly, by any means. Often, a child has already been vaccine-injured, and when parents cannot get a doctor to sign off on a medical exemption for that same child or younger siblings (this is

often the case), they resort to the other options for exemption. State-produced online modules about vaccination will not be able to tell parents what they have not already heard many times before. It won't be effective, and will be a complete waste of energy, resources, and taxpayer dollars. These parents are essentially going to view this as a paid advertisement for the pharmaceutical industry, and nothing more.

4) If you do choose to recommend a "Do Pass" on this bill, which I sincerely hope does not happen, an informational video should be required to include ALL RISKS associated with vaccines. It should explain how vaccine clinical trials are conducted, how long safety studies last, and should include the package insert for each and every vaccine on the exemption form. This would be the only way to ensure true informed consent, something we all should be in favor of.

Again, I ask that you give a "Do Not Pass" recommendation on HB1469. Thank you for reading!

Sincerely,  
Melyssa Howry  
District 4  
New Town