

I am writing this testimony in OPPOSITION to any bill or amendment that is proposed in attempt to remove or in any way change the current statute for religious exemption from vaccines in order for children to attend school. If you remove religious exemptions for those parents that use them, you are therefore mandating that they do them or keep their children out of school and otherwise by law homeschool them. Every one of these parents, including myself, are hardworking tax paying citizens and forcing them to quit their jobs to homeschool their children would not be in the best interest of the state. This emergency bill or amendment is the very reason why the legislative process is so alienating to the very citizens it claims to protect, if it wasn't for colleagues of mine informing me of these last minute public forums and possible votes, it seems to me to goal was to slip this past the people of this state. I am going to go out on a limb here and ask you to look around you, who is concerned here and who are you targeting, the parents that are showing up and making their voices heard don't want anything changed to the current legislation, there is no emergency, if there were, people from both sides would be flooding the streets. Take the time to talk to parents that use the religious exemption, we are thoughtful, smart, and raising awesome children that you would personally be happy to know.

The public health crisis lies in the chronic diseases our healthcare system is not prepared to handle. I could not be at the public forum today because my husband has to have emergency eye surgery and is rapidly going blind, I am healing patients every day from chronic pain, and my children are attending school and thriving. My family could not handle the financial burden of a chronic condition if my children were to face one, let me do my job as a parent in doing what I know to be best for their health and I will therefore do my part as a citizen to contribute taxes to be used for those that need them.

Sincerely,

Heather Strauch

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