

I thank the esteemed members of the committee for allowing this Kansas citizen to speak to the issue of adding to the list of mandatory vaccines for Kansas children yet another vaccine, this time for meningitis.

As a Kansan and father of 7 children, I object to this pending legislation for many reasons. I believe they are all significant and worthy of your consideration.

First, this is very simply a question of parental rights, parental choice, and personal liberty. Second, it is a question of science and safety. Parents have the inalienable right to make healthcare decisions for their children. Parents are told, rightly, they must educate their children; if they choose to do so in the schools provided by the state, they are then told they must vaccinate their children with a large number of shots. The vaccine schedule has grown enormously from the time I was 11. The fact is, there simply are no randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, replicated long-term health studies of the effects of the current vaccine schedule on children; there are no non-randomized studies, there are no non-placebo-controlled studies, there are no studies at all, period. And now you are poised to add yet another shot to the list. But if I were to come to you to ask your approval for a new pain killer and I had no studies, I only told you, "The science surrounding pain killers is solid, what's the problem?" you would rightly dismiss me without further consideration. There is risk involved with these vaccines, and I encourage you to do some research on real lives affected, devastated, by vaccine injuries. I know others will speak to this, so I will move on to other concerns of my own.

I lived for several years in several countries which had been part of the Soviet bloc, including Hungary. One of the main streets in Hungary is named after Dr. Ignac Semmelweis, who changed the course of medicine because of his unorthodox hunch that doctors' and nurses' unwashed hands were killing women and children in childbirth. He was laughed at, ridiculed, and shunned for his nonsensical idea. Eventually this radical and silly idea won the day, but not until after he died in an asylum following depression and breakdown due to the resistance he met from the entire medical community. Louis Pasteur later confirmed Semmelweis's germ theory, and today we know that Semmelweis was right when everyone around him was wrong.

We also knew until fairly recently, beyond any doubt, that ulcers are caused by stress and spicy foods, until suddenly we knew that they are caused by bacteria. Everybody was right until somebody who didn't pay attention to the consensus realized that everybody was wrong. We've known for a long time that butter is unhealthy for us, except that now we know that butter is actually good for us. Everybody was right until somebody challenged the conventional wisdom and now we know that everybody was wrong. I point out these examples, a few quite recent, to illustrate that we do not know everything there is to know about the human body, and to simply legislate one more vaccine into an already long list that has our children as a live study group is not good science, it's not good legislation, and it's not good government. Living in those former communist countries, I learned a lot about life in a place where the government tells its subjects what it can and cannot do, what it must and must not do. It's not the kind of place I would like my children to grow up.

Representative Eplee, a proponent of this bill, states in his testimony that around 1,000 cases of meningitis in the entire United States per year justify this new mandatory vaccine. These numbers make no sense, just on the face of it. 5 cases a year in Kansas justify adding a mandatory vaccine? I am by no means unconcerned with the effects of meningitis; a schoolmate of mine from grade school, a mother, contracted it several years ago, and is now a double-amputee. I also live as a primary caregiver to a child with a life-threatening disease, and I manage her medicine on an hourly basis. Some parents of

vaccine-injured children have to give non-stop care. 1000 cases a year of meningitis, while there are 30 times the number of new diagnoses each year of Type 1 diabetes; my baby daughter turned one in the hospital 7 months ago, after nearly dying when her pancreas stopped functioning and she became a diabetic. Yet checking blood glucose is not a part of the normal routine physician check-up. Is something 30 times more common, and often as deadly, that much less important than this? Would not a better idea for legislation, if legislation must come, be to fund education for parents and physicians about the signs of the onset of Type 1 diabetes so they can avoid harrowing trips to the ER and the ICU like ours, or even death?

Dr. Eplee's election platform states as a core value of his that "Family values must be protected". Is not the right of parents to make important health care decisions for their children not a family value? Another of his platform's core values is that "Health policy should be determined by our legislature, not the federal government". Yet in his testimony he bemoans the low rate of vaccinations in Kansas in light of the CDC's recommendations. The CDC is not a Kansas organization. I agree with him in spirit; if important health care decisions are better made for Kansans by Kansas state government than by federal government, aren't they also better made by parents than by government, at any level?

Dr. Pahud, in her testimony, points out that there are 2 categories of meningitis for which she wishes to see mandatory vaccines given to our children. One category she explains is growing on college campuses; why this means we should be giving our 11-yr-olds a shot for this remains unclear; More to the point, however, this bill does not address this issue of two new vaccines, as Mr. Sullivan points out in his fiscal note. This is bad legislation purely from a fiscal perspective, particularly in times where balancing the budget seems impossible. This doesn't even take into account the number of parents who will pull their children from the public schools because of this, and that number is not insignificant.

As a Kansas, as a parent, as an American, I urge you to vote against this and any bill that erodes parental rights, that can't be financially assessed, and which clearly creates more risks for our children than any claimed benefit.

Thank you very much.

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