

Osage County, Kansas

February 11th, 2020

RE: House Bill 2601

Representative Steve Huebert, Chairman of the Education Committee:

I am writing to express my deep disagreement with the current policy of an unelected official mandating, with little to no input from Kansans, what they must have injected into their bodies, or the bodies of those for who they are responsible.

Though not a product of the Kansas K-12 system (I moved here later in life), I have encountered a mandated vaccination before, when preparing to attend a state university in North Dakota (where I lived at the time). I was able to receive an exemption, with the qualification that if an outbreak occurred, I would not be allowed to come on the NDSU campus. As I recall, there were two things that motivated me to request the exemption, 1) What right did the State have to mandate what I had to accept into my body, and 2) If everyone else is vaccinated, why did it matter if I was? You may not be surprised to note that those two items are still the issues I have with mandated vaccinations, in regards to the rights that I believe the State should preserve for parents.

If vaccines are to be mandated by the State, I believe efficacy, with no injury beyond the mildest symptoms, should be also be mandated. If the latter part of that statement seems unreasonable, I would respectfully say, that it only seems reasonable in light of the former part of that statement. If the risk to the general public is so great as to require mass vaccinations, the risk to the vaccine receiver must also be accounted for.

In 1986, however, President Reagan, under pressure from at least one pharmaceutical manufacturer, who felt that the risk of claims of injury would affect their ability to produce vaccines, enacted the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, which transferred the responsibility of paying for injury claims from pharmaceutical companies, to the U.S. Government, through a tax on vaccinations. It's ironic that those who make a profit from providing vaccinations were able to leave the responsibility for footing the bill for injuries, with the very ones who were at risk of injury. The risk of the U.S. Government is decreased by turning away two-thirds of the claims, and by the limits that limited safety testing, and short-term tracking of vaccination effects provided by the pharmaceutical industry.

When I was a kid in the 1980's, 7 vaccinations were available/required. I count 25 vaccinations that, as of August 2nd, 2019, are required to attend K-12 public education in Kansas. Please keep this in mind as House Bill 2601 is being considered – who bears financial interest and risk if more and more vaccines are required? Pharmaceutical corporations (who are not accountable to Kansans), or the citizens of Kansas? I submit to you, that it is the citizen of Kansas, who bears the financial risk long after the pharmaceutical companies have pocketed the profits that mandated vaccinations guarantee.

Please also consider, to who's whim and will are Kansans subject to, if the status quo of the current statute stands – their own, or that of a body that are immediately and directly accountable to Kansans,

or that of an unelected, and therefore, largely unaccountable, official? It gives one great pause to consider where such power could lead.

I'm asking Legislators of the State of Kansas to consider who they are supporting if they allow control of mandated vaccinations to rest with an unelected official. What accountability does the Secretary of KDHE have? What recourse do average Kansans, who are forced to give up their individual autonomy to the dictates and decisions of an appointed Cabinet member, have? Costly lawsuits? What remedy is the State supplying for a Secretaries whose actions can inflict injuries upon the children of this State? Though lawsuits may be possible for some, they are certainly barriers to other citizens, and are a certain drain on resources held by individuals and the State (which should be the same, as the State exists to serve the individual), and are still limited in scope due to the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.

Consider who the State is supporting if it sides with the Secretary. Consider who is receiving grants from the KDHE to promote statewide vaccination programs (Immunize Kansas Coalition and similar organizations). Consider that it is pharmaceutical corporations who have the financial incentive to support statewide vaccination programs. Consider who will receive financial support from pharmaceutical corporations - corporations who are unaccountable to the citizen - for promoting their agenda. Please consider wisely who's interests the legislature is supporting, should this status quo of KDHE Secretary mandated vaccinations be allowed to continue.

Sincerely,

L.E. Olsen