

February 11, 2020

Dear Chairman Huebert,

I am writing to you in regards to House Bill 2601, which would limit the KDHE from mandating further vaccines for school-age children. I urge you, along with your fellow committee members, to strongly support this bill.

I am a Physical Therapist and come from a family of medical professionals including three physicians. I never questioned the recommended vaccine schedule, so as soon as my son was born (in 1997), I followed it perfectly. But, he was not the healthy baby I expected him to be.... and he kept getting sicker. At first he just got sick a lot with numerous ear infections, coughs and fevers. Over time he was diagnosed with RAD (Reactive Airway Disease) as anytime he contracted even a simple cold, he would struggle to breathe and end up in the ER, or hospital. Finally I was told, by his pediatrician, "This child has the worst asthmatic lungs I've ever seen on a 3 year old." It crushed me. He put us on "preventative" breathing treatments 3 times a day with one medication, plus another medication for the acute coughing and difficulty breathing. I was stumped: I could not understand how, with doing so much right (careful with diet, safety, as well as the regular visits/immunizations, etc), I could have a child that was so sick.

As I started observing and researching, I began to see a pattern: my son got sicker/reacted after well-baby checks. One time was particularly bad and he ended up with a very high fever and RSV and in the hospital (again). He had the DTaP right before. That was the last immunization he had. I could spend a lot of time detailing his recovery, but it was steady, actually quicker than I thought it would be, and wonderful!! Now, he is 23 and has no memory of the time when he struggled to breathe. He considered the Marines and did preparatory conditioning for that (a lot of running in boots!). He is strong and fit and never has lung issues: no inhalers, no medications, no doctor/ER/hospital visits; no allergies even! His diagnosis of asthma was eliminated over a decade ago. He graduated (on scholarship) this fall with an engineering degree, while working part time as a deputy reserve sheriff. He has excelled, and it has been so nice to have him not have to worry about health issues with all the heavy demands he's had on him.

Our 5 children that came after him, were not vaccinated, and I can tell you there has been a world of difference in their health! No ER or hospital visits for any of them. No repeat ear infections, no auto-immune or chronic conditions, no RAD/asthma or eczema or nagging or persistent health problems at all. And no medications or inhalers that go along with all of that! They are ages 8 thru 20 now and they are rarely sick, and if they catch something, they get over it in good course with no need for medical intervention.

I understand every person, child, and situation is different, and there are families that want vaccines as they prefer the assurance it gives them. That is great for them. But I STRONGLY OPPOSE mandatory vaccinations. There is risk involved, and that demands a choice. The parents and child are the ones that have to live with the consequences day after day, night after night, year after year, decade after decade. They deserve the right to say no. It is staggering to me that, in a freedom-loving country like America, parents have lost/are losing that right. All this is compounded by the fact that the vaccine manufacturers have no liability when things do go wrong; truly unbelievable.

My son's story is not a rare one, unfortunately. And now the vaccine schedule is packed with way more than what my son had; this is why it must stop. PLEASE support this bill-- and support the freedom of each person to choose what is injected into their/their child's body.

Thank you for reading and for your service to our state.

Michele Peniston

Augusta, Kansas