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Representatives Fedolfi, Creighton, and Colcombe,

State House-House Member Mail
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Representatives Fedolfi, Creighton and Colcombe,

I am writing to you as a member of your constituency. I have been a public health nurse in the state of New Hampshire for over 30 years and am very concerned about some currently pending bills in the house of representatives.

HB: 1811, 1616, 1584, and 1719 are all aimed at changing how the state addresses vaccinations in the public setting.

Proponents of these bills focus on presenting them as protection of parental rights. As a parent who adopted 2 children from the New Hampshire foster system, I fully understand the importance of placing parents in charge of their children's health and safety. However, if we are going to speak about rights we also need to speak about responsibilities.

Parents have the right to refuse vaccinations for their children. As representatives of the entire public you have a responsibility to ensure that parents that wish to have their children vaccinated have unencumbered access to that health care and the best evidence to make those decisions.

HB 1811 removing the requirements for vaccinations will harm the most vulnerable children. I do not worry about the children whose parents choose not to get them vaccinated, I worry about the children that never get the chance to see a doctor or have health care because the parents are not getting the help they need. Having vaccine requirements means someone is asking about these children and paying attention to their health.

HB 1616 will be a gag order placed on healthcare providers in public settings. Limiting information is never a good thing. We cannot tell people to research their questions and then block the information that they need to make an informed decision.

HB 1584 eliminates the form that parents sign to let schools and childcare facilities know they are choosing not to vaccinate. This form is not about tracking who is not vaccinated, it is to allow the information about vaccinations to be distributed in an orderly fashion. Having a centralized identifiable form means that parents only need to sign that form once and they will not be questioned about their children's immunization status again. Without a specific form there will be miss communication resulting in parents having to communicate their choices more than once.

HB 1719 eliminating the Hep B vaccine requirement. This bill has my full attention. In 2002 I donated 65% of my liver to my aunt. Her liver had failed as a result of Hepatitis that she got from a bad blood transfusion 40 years prior. She had no symptoms until it was too late and she could not be treated with anything other than a new liver. Removing this requirement puts babies at risk for contracting a disease that is invisible in many cases until it has done tremendous harm. Again nothing is preventing parents from saying no to this vaccine, however, removing it from requirements will enable insurance companies to refuse paying for it as unnecessary. This will take the choice away from parents that do want to vaccinate their children.

As representatives to the entire public it my sincere hope that you take protecting the rights of all citizens into consideration when you vote. Voting in support of these bills will limit access to health care for some of your constituents. You can support parents' rights to not vaccinate their children while not taking away access and the rights of others.

Sincerely

Sharon Gamache RN, MSN