

Dear Health and Human Services Committee Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee,

I am a registered nurse and a mom, and I am concerned about SF610.

In nursing school I was taught about “sacred cows”: practices or beliefs that everyone believes to be true and no one is allowed to question. We were given examples of previous practices that have been improved through questioning how we have always done things and implementing evidence based practice. I am becoming concerned that vaccinations have become a sacred cow. Vaccination induced immunity is an extremely useful public health tool. However, it is concerning to me that the new language in SF610 is resorting to using coercion to compel parents in our state to vaccinate their children by taking away their option to have their conscientious exemption recognized by their childcare provider. All this despite the fact that the reason they have pursued an exemption in the first place is that they have sincerely held and deeply personal (and sometimes religious) beliefs that don’t allow them to vaccinate.

I am not anti-vaxx. But I am anti-coercion. If we really want more people to vaccinate their kids, let’s tear down the sacred cow of not being allowed to question vaccines. Let’s bring back real informed consent- actually talk through the CDC paper that goes with each vaccination and the inserts that come from the manufacturer. Let’s talk about what might happen if you have an adverse reaction and what might happen if you get the disease. If we really want to increase vaccination rates, let’s do the work to make vaccines safer so there is no downside. Let’s hold vaccine manufacturers accountable to improving the safety of their products. Let’s find a way to make them with ingredients that folks don’t find objectionable (often religious objections come from the fact that some are derived from aborted fetal cell lines). And let’s stop labeling everyone who expresses concern or asks questions about vaccinations as “anti-vaxx”.

As someone who cares about my community and my neighbors, coercing families to vaccinate their kids by limiting their day care options is not an idea I can get behind.

Respectfully submitted,

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