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Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Oral testimony opposing Senate Bill 19

February 5th, 2025

Chairperson Gossage, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 19.

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Jason Ghumm. I have been teaching since 1997. I started teaching because I love to learn about new discoveries and inventions that make the world a better place. It was this desire for knowledge that I wanted to encourage in students and future generations.

During my teaching career, I also had the opportunity to work in a residential care facility as well as a hospital laboratory.

By preventing schools or healthcare facilities from requiring vaccinations or quarantining persons, diseases are allowed to spread. When I worked in healthcare, we had to receive an influenza vaccine each year or be required to wear face masks. This was so that we would not spread illness to persons who were already sick or immunocompromised.

In the classroom, students that get sick miss class, causing a loss of learning. They also spread the illness to other students and faculty, causing them to miss. Just this past week, at my wife's school (a small K-12 in rural KS), fifteen employees missed several days with the flu. As we all know, substitutes are not readily available. Paras, who are there for special needs students have to cover even more students, resulting in the loss of learning for multiple students. Many of the youngest students ended up in the ER.

I work in higher education. Students who miss multiple days of college can get overwhelmed and fall behind. If they don't get a high enough grade, those courses are often retaken. This causes college education to become even more expensive. At my school, there are two cancer survivors, two transplant recipients, and at least one faculty member's spouse is a cancer survivor. By not quarantining and allowing students to attend, who are not vaccinated, puts them at greater risk.

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