

Testimony of Michael Kazee

Ohio House Health Committee

Re: House Bill 559

Opposition to proposed changes to immunization exemptions and tracking processes

May 23, 2018

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and honorable members of the Health Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide opponent testimony for House Bill 559. My name is Michael Kazee, and I'm the father of two children with vaccine injuries. Against our wishes, our newborn son was vaccinated with hepatitis B vaccine right before he was discharged. He immediately started having breastfeeding issues then stopped taking in anything by mouth. Unbeknownst to us, he had a bowel birth defect, and something in the vaccine seemed to instigate a life-threatening condition called a volvulus. He would spend 11 weeks in the NICU, endure 3 major bowel surgeries, and be left with less than 80% of his small intestine – a condition we were told gave



him a 30% chance of surviving past his first year and that placed him at increased risk from various infections. Before he was discharged from the NICU, we were told he had to be vaccinated. When my wife pushed back – because she knew that vaccines had some risks and he had been through so much – she was told that sometimes the hospital had to remove custody from parents who couldn't be trusted to make good decisions. She reluctantly consented, and he was very sick that next week – attributed to him being home and having extreme short gut.



My wife, being a biomedical engineer, kept careful notes about all the intake, output, weight, general health, and developmental data for our son. We were under the watchful eye of several doctors, but she was very forthright about the fact that, with each round of vaccines, he was getting sick – eczema with the first round, then reflux, then allergy to his “hypoallergenic” formula, then repeated respiratory and ear infection – all happening shortly after each vaccination visit. Then the developmental milestones slowed or vanished. He stopped babbling, laughing, and engaging with us. By one year of age, he

couldn't independently sit up and cried a lot. Each time I listened as her concerns were dismissed: he was on his own timeline, he was stubborn, we were too attentive and anxious, he was spoiled ... until, at nine months, she insisted that the pediatrician run a developmental screening, and the doctor finally became concerned. My wife had worked with children with disabilities and understood the importance of early intervention, and yet all her concerns were downplayed. He was referred to early intervention at 11 months and was diagnosed with PDD by age two.

At age 17 months, after a half dozen ear infections with each round of vaccines and antibiotics that we now understand were likely not always necessary and that actually posed a lot of risk for him with extreme short gut, we turned to chiropractic care in an effort to avoid ear tube surgery – another risk for a child who was immunocompromised. His life changed dramatically, as we learned about vaccine risk and decided to stop vaccinating him. Even his medical doctors were astounded at his progress and agreed that the vaccines had been creating more harm than good for him.



Our daughter was born right before he turned 3. We had managed to get our son to a pretty good place by then, starting to speak and able to walk and run and play. We decided that our daughter would not be vaccinated. We just couldn't bear the idea of watching a child disintegrate before our eyes again. However, when we took her for a brief check at 10 weeks, we were bullied into giving her 3 vaccines – DTaP, Hib, and IPV – because she was “robustly healthy” and because she could help protect her vulnerable older brother who could no longer be vaccinated. The shrieking started immediately, then the high fever, then vomiting and diarrhea followed by seizures. My wife called the doctor, who told her not to worry about any of that because our daughter must have been getting sick with something when we brought her in. After a long sleepless night, she called again expecting to get an appointment that morning – only to be dismissed from the practice because they were “uncomfortable” that she was mentioning the words “vaccine reaction.”



By law, the doctors are supposed to report those adverse events, but no one ever mentioned that to us. They didn't tell us about VAERS or the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. They didn't even know that our daughter would go on to develop severe allergies and a seizure disorder. In fact, when my wife had mentioned that the vaccine information sheets given to us at that visit listed many of the same symptoms, she was told that those vaccines weren't associated with those reactions, even though they were clearly on the papers! I don't know if you have any idea what it's like to have a medically fragile preschooler with autism and to have to deal with your newborn daughter's vaccine reactions, but it's not easy. The doctor we found to help immediately pointed out that our daughter seemed to have suffered a stroke-like event, as the left side of her face drooped significantly, and one eye was turned inward. It would take months for her to be able to smile again, and even that was still crooked. She would need extensive vision therapy and require special diet to combat allergy and other symptoms. After one round of vaccines.

About 5 months after our daughter's reactions, our son injured his hand. At the ER, we were harassed about a "tetanus shot," which is really a Tdap or DTaP depending on age to the point that we consented. We had explained the kids' bad reactions and were told that our child would die without a tetanus shot, which is not true, especially for the type of injury he had which had bled freely and was not contaminated by dirt or feces. It was like a switch went off again in our child! Within days, he was making a weird facial expression often accompanied by a low "NG" sound. It happened every day, several times a day. Later we would be told it was likely seizure activity, but when your child has an autism diagnosis, many issues are dismissed as autistic behaviors. The "NG" face was also accompanied by violent rages that he had not exhibited before. Again, we were told that this just happens with autistic kids – even though the onset directly corresponded with the vaccine.



Right now, we are in the process of getting ready to seek guardianship for our son, who turns 18 this fall. That means that we have had to have our child declared medically and legally incompetent to manage his own life! It also means he will be dependent upon us or "the system" of state and national resources for the remainder of his life. In 2014, Autism Speaks reported that the average cost of caring for an individual with autism and intellectual disability for a lifetime was \$2.4 million, and that is even more when the person has multiple diagnoses like our son. The US had 3.5 million people with autism (again this is 2014) whose supports cost \$61 million per year for children and \$175 million per year for adults. Our son continues to suffer from sensitivity to many chemicals in his environment, and a couple years ago, he suffered a severe reaction after his orthodontist accidentally placed one braces wire containing nickel in his mouth.

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>

Perhaps the doctors who are pushing for this bill should redirect their attention and resources to supporting the kids who have been injured and permanently disabled rather than demanding the privilege to sign off on another human being's religious and conscience exemption. Perhaps they should work toward adequate screening for kids like ours, so that they can be spared horrific vaccine reactions and lifelong disability or even death. Perhaps they should look for causes and solutions to

the many health issues plaguing our state and nation: autism and developmental disabilities, chronic mental and physical health issues, opioid epidemic and resulting effect on children/families, antibiotic crisis from overuse, chronic school absenteeism, lead poisoning ... I could go on and on and on, but I'll stop there.

All of this should indicate that the information we were given by doctors as parents about vaccines was incomplete, inaccurate, and misleading. We can't change that for our children, who are left with lifelong effects of our society's lack of proper vaccine safety and screening protocols, who are dependent on our personal and state/national resources for resources to support them in their daily lives, who may be impaired in their ability to experience fullness of life in terms of employment, independent living, marriage, and parenthood. However, we can begin to make changes for other children, starting with giving their parents the power to determine how to best support their health.

Thanks again for hearing our story. I'm happy to answer any questions you have for me.