

February 7, 2020

Dear Colorado General Assembly Member:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to you today to express our strong opposition to a series of bills, which, if adopted, would have detrimental impacts to the health, safety and well-being of Colorado's children and communities. They are:

- House Bill 1063
- House Bill 1144
- House Bill 1239
- Senate Bill 84

We urge you to vote NO on these measures.

All of these bills attempt to significantly limit the ability of our government and community-based service providers to protect and promote the common good in regards to public health, public safety and / or our public education system. We deeply respect the rights of individuals and families to make decisions about the health and education of themselves and their children. Yet we also know that many personal decisions can have significant consequences on the health and welfare of the broader community.

Government exists to both promote the general welfare of the public and to protect individual rights. Throughout history, our democracy has wrestled with how to strike the appropriate balance when these priorities conflict. However, in the case of this legislation, the line is clear and no wrestling is required: ***the bills before you go much too far in sacrificing the public good in the name of individual rights.***

House Bill 20-1063 and House Bill 20-1144, each concerning the fundamental rights of parents, are broadly-written measures which will have sweeping consequences across public and private systems, including but not limited to our K-12 education, health care and child care systems. These bills, among other things, could limit access to appropriate health care and interfere with the ability of students and parents to know how their schools are performing academically.

House Bill 20-1239 would implement several measures that are not based in science or currently available evidence. Vaccines, according to the World Health Organization, are considered one of the most important public health interventions of the twentieth century, saving millions of lives and reducing the spread of contagious diseases. Ignoring this science is dangerous, and if passed, HB 1239 could lead to harmful consequences in schools and communities across Colorado.

Senate Bill 20-084 would prohibit employers, including health care providers, child care providers and others who serve children and community members who are medically vulnerable, from either requiring their employees to be vaccinated or

taking other precautionary steps to prevent the spread of vaccine preventable disease. Vaccines are safe and effective. This is settled science and the conclusion of the global medical and health communities. Requiring immunizations or other precautionary steps to prevent the spread of disease as a condition of employment for those who work around individuals accessing health care services, especially those who are medically fragile, is a common sense measure designed to protect public and individual health. Limiting the power of employers to establish a healthy environment, particularly when they are devoted to serving community members who are vulnerable to poor health and vaccine-preventable disease, is irresponsible and dangerous.

We urge you to join us – a broad and diverse group of health, education and human service advocates - in protecting the safety and welfare of Colorado's children and communities. Vote NO on House Bills 1063, 1144 and 1239, and Senate Bill 84.

Thank you for your consideration of our position and for your service to our great state.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter
Children's Hospital Colorado
Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials
Colorado Association of School Nurses
Colorado Chapter, American College of Physicians
Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Community Health Network
Colorado Hospital Association
Colorado Medical Society
Colorado Parents for Vaccinated Communities
Colorado PTA
Denver Health
Every Child Pediatrics
HealthONE Hospitals / Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children
Healthier Colorado
Immunize Colorado
Interfaith Alliance of Colorado

(Signers as of 4pm on Friday, February 7, 2020; Outreach still in process)