

March 24, 2015

To: Salud Carbajal, First District Supervisor
Janet Wolf, Second District Supervisor
Doreen Farr, Third District Supervisor
Peter Adam, Fourth District Supervisor
Steve Lavagnino, Fifth District Supervisor

From: Gail Marshall, Former County Supervisor from the Third District

Re: Senate Bill 277, Dept. Item #2

I have been hopeful that at some point, the issue of vaccinations would find its way into a rational dialogue, critical thinking, careful consideration - that a topic as relevant as this one would motivate people to search beyond hysteria on either side. Instead, I read something daily vilifying families choosing not to vaccinate their children. Along with accusations of a baseless decision to ignore science, concerned families are held accountable for the illnesses of others. I stand flummoxed on the issue of vaccinations and the ease by which families who choose not to vaccinate their children are demonized.

As a matter of fact, the families I encounter who choose not to vaccinate their children do not enter into this decision lightly. Between personal experiences with vaccination injuries and thorough research, they have made a decision that is not easy to make, particularly with the fear and accusatory nature from proponents of vaccinations.

Congress in 1986, and the U.S. Supreme Court in 2011, declared vaccines to be "unavoidably unsafe" and shielded drug companies from all liability. Vaccines may be the only medical product the government mandates and completely indemnifies.

SB277 gives the government the ability to force any person to be vaccinated against a list of 10 infectious diseases, with the option to add more as deemed necessary. Again, these vaccinations would be mandated while shielding drug companies and medical providers from liability.

Here is some information I find quite compelling that is not conspiratorial or extrapolated from emotional assumptions:

- VAERS – Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, a national vaccine safety surveillance program co-sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), receives approximately 30,000 vaccination injury reports annually, with 13% classified as serious (e.g., associated with disability, hospitalization, life-threatening illness or death).
- The National Childhood Vaccination Injury Act of 1986 protects pharmaceutical companies and medical providers from lawsuits by parents who claim vaccinations harmed their children. Parents must go in front of a special tribunal set up by Congress in the event of a vaccination injury. This “vaccine court” has awarded 2.5 billion dollars from the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Trust Fund for vaccine injury and death claims. The Compensation Trust Fund is funded from a surcharge on each vaccine. Vaccinations **do** in fact cause injury and death and 2.5 billion dollars has been spent compensating families under the National Childhood Vaccination Injury Act.
- MERCK, MMR pharmaceutical company, is currently in federal court because they, “fraudulently misled the government and omitted, concealed, and adulterated material information regarding the efficacy of its MMR vaccine in violation of the FCA [False Claims Act].”

I am compelled by the argument that parents who choose not to vaccinate their children are accused of ignoring science. As a matter of fact, long-term safety studies of vaccines for outcomes other than infectious disease have not been completed. There is **no** scientific research to support the long-term effects of 49 doses of 14 vaccines administered before the age of 6. The assumption of vaccine safety is like saying 14 individual drugs have been proven to be safe so we can give all 14 drugs at once to our children. It is truly impossible for an accurate risk/benefit analysis of vaccines to be made with the **lack** of scientific evidence in place.

I am discouraged about the scolding proponents hurl at the unvaccinated for compromising the health of a community. In fact, the science suggests otherwise. If we are not immune to a disease then we have the potential to carry and contract that disease and vaccines do not claim to be 100% effective.

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In fact, according to the California Department of Health, Immunization Branch, schools report 92% of school children immunized. We have pockets of 95+% vaccinated in our state. We have a highly vaccinated population and outbreaks still occur. This is not due to the unvaccinated, but the inability of the vaccines to adequately protect the body from contracting the virus. The only way to build immunity to a virus or bacteria is through natural exposure and re-exposure. Boosters attempt to mimic re-exposure, but vaccines disrupt the natural immune process. Prior to the MMR vaccine, mothers passed immunity to their babies through the placenta and breast milk. Vaccinated mothers cannot pass immunity to their infants. Infants are not protected, not because of the unvaccinated, but because of the absence of maternal antibodies in their vaccinated mother's milk.

According to the proposed legislation, there have been 100 cases of measles reported in California. California has a population of over 38 million. It is important to underscore that the measles virus has not caused deaths in our state. High death rates due to measles happen in countries where population are malnourished and lack the vitamins necessary to process the virus. SB277 is a dangerously reactionary measure, which will allow government, historically influenced by lobby groups, to govern how we care for the bodies of our children and ourselves.

I am shocked that legislative action is proposed that will take parents' rights away to make medical choices for their children, rather than turn attention to the complicated nature of natural immunity, the effectiveness of our bodies design to fight disease, the ability of a virus and bacteria to evolve and become unresponsive to a vaccine, the true efficacy of vaccines, the responsibility of pharmaceutical companies who make them and the 2.5 billion dollars paid to families of children with vaccine injuries.

Hysteria has spread to taking away parents' rights to advocate for their children's health by mandating vaccines. This is a complicated issue. Fear will not yield critical thinking and careful consideration. Fear will compromise the health of our children not promote or ensure it.

