

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Neil Butler

Oppose

Honorable Members of the Committee,

As a father and a former Maryland Delegate Chief of Staff, I am familiar with our legislature and respect it's members and the work they do for Maryland's children. That being said, HB 87/ SB 135 are NOT in the best interest of our children, and I strongly oppose these bills.

I do not want my sons to make the decision for vaccines without my guidance and consent. These are decisions we make as a family and with our trusted medical providers. There are contraindications and family history to be considered with each vaccination, and to remove parental input from this decision is inexcusably dangerous. If they cannot buy cigarettes or alcohol until age 21, how can they consent to being injected with a vaccine? We have clearly, in the state of Maryland just last year, decided that anyone under the age of 21 is not able to assess risk appropriately, and therefore they need parental guidance "...when they are underage and their brains are still developing," as Maryland Department of Health Secretary Robert R. Neall said, referring to raising the age for tobacco.

I respectfully ask that you vote no on these bills to protect Maryland's children.

- Neil Butler

Annapolis, Maryland 21403

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Jenna DeCesaris Butler

Oppose

Honorable Members of the Committee,

I'm writing to oppose HB87 and SB135- "Access to Vaccines Act". Please consider the widespread implications of this legislation. As a Maryland parent of school-age children, I am greatly concerned.

- "Mature minor" consent laws erode parental rights and put children, parents, healthcare providers, and other institutions AT RISK.
- Minors are unlikely to know their complete and detailed personal medical history, or their family medical history. This information is essential for a healthcare provider to know before administering any vaccination.
- It opens institutions like our school systems to liability for errors such as administering the wrong injection or procedure (cnn.com/2019/09/30/health/16-students-accident-indiana/index.html)- if minors are allowed to consent, do we then have school hosted flu or HPV shot clinics?
- The age for tobacco products was just raised to 21 years old- if we don't believe that even 18 is old enough to understand the consequences of tobacco use, how can we then say that 16 is old enough to assume the responsibility of medical consent?
- Children are much more influenced by authority figures, and more susceptible to peer pressure in group settings (ie school or camp clinics)- this greatly affects their ability to give true and complete informed consent. Removing parental protection from this situation makes them extremely vulnerable to unsafe events.
- If parents are not informed of, let alone consenting to, a medical procedure (wmar2news.com/investigators/teen-given-birth-control-implant-at-school-without-parents-permission), how will they be able to watch for side effects and get appropriate medical attention if needed? If there are long term complications due to an error or the medical procedure, who is liable for that?

There are far, far too many risks associated with this legislation for it to be considered beneficial for Maryland's children. Please vote no.

Sincerely,
Jenna DeCesaris Butler

Annapolis, Maryland 21403

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Sara Hall

Oppose

Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am a Physical Therapist and have treated Guillain-Barre Syndrome in teens, adults, and the elderly post flu vaccination. I have also seen devastating vaccine injuries after the DTaP vaccine. Children and teens do not know/ understand all of the ramifications of their medical decisions. Adverse side effects to vaccinations do happen. Vaccination should be a thorough discussion with one's primary care physician as it can be very harmful to particular populations of people with underlying genetic conditions or other medical reasons. Informed consent is always under utilized and children/ teens are not capable of making these decisions and asking pertinent questions. They are susceptible to be taken advantage of with improper informed consent.

Sara J. Hall, DPT
Mechanicville, MD

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Deirdre Elvis-Peterson

Oppose

I am writing you in opposition of your proposed cross- filed bill HB0087.

I am deeply disturbed by the government's attempt to usurp parental rights and place them in the hands of a person my child would see for 30 minutes out of a year. That's right, children see the doctor more than likely only for their school physical other than that they may go in one other time that year, at least that's how healthy children's schedules should look.

The government wants to entrust a person who sees my child for 30 minutes out of a year with a decision about the child I am raising.

Let's do some math

There are 365 days in a year.
That makes 8760 hours in a year.
As Parents we raise, nurture and care for our children all those hours.

Our children, at our discretion, go to their doctors as needed.
For the most part, a healthy child need only see their doctor for their school physical, and perhaps again for a sports or summer camp physical.

However, for this example I'll be generous and say a healthy child, on average, sees their physician for a total of 2 hours out of the year. So, I am generously saying the visits are about 20 mins long and that allows for 6 contacts per year.

So, for my generous example a physician would see a child for:
 $2/8760$ hours per year which is 0.00023 hours each year...
which works out to be 0.0037 hours in their 16-year lifetime.

Now the state of Maryland, in a demonstration of EXTREME government overreach and encroachment on the family unit, wants to give the person who sees my child for 0.0037 hours in their 16-year lifetime the exclusive right to:

- A. Decide on the maturity of my child
- B. Decide if my child is mature enough to make major medical decisions
- C. Exclude my parental experience, knowledge and best interest of my child

There is NO ONE on this planet that has my child's best interest at heart above that of me and my husband.

The government **certainly** does not and a doctor, who is PAID to even see my child, **absolutely** does not. The doctor, parent(s)/child relationship is a business relationship.
Money is exchanged for a service for which the physician has been hired to perform.
That service is usually in the form of an examination followed by recommendations.

rec·om·men·da·tion
/ˌrɛkəmənˈdāʃ(ə)n/

noun

noun: **recommendation**; plural noun: **recommendations**

a suggestion or proposal as to the best course of action, especially one put forward by an authoritative body.

As defined, recommendations are not absolutes.

It is beyond a lot of gall for a state to think it can impose these types of restrictions on parents and bombard families in this manner with overreaching legislation.

Was this your goal when you took an oath to SERVE the good families of the State of Maryland? Was that a part of your campaign? Was the usurping of parental rights part of your agenda?

I pray these were not your intentions.

So, in summary, I do not support SB0135/HB0087:

- The doctor, parent(s)/child relationship is a business relationship.
- Physicians are hired by parents to consult in health matters.
- The advice of the physician is always in the form of a recommendation.
- The parent then decides on the best course of action as they are raising, caring for and nurturing the child AND paying the bill!
- The state's attempt to interject more into this business relationship is an encroachment on citizen rights to life liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
- The parent(s) also know the child best and are arguably the sole adults who have the child's best interest at heart.

Sincerely,

Deirdre Elvis-Peterson
District 44B

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Olga Yefimov

Oppose

I am a concerned parent of 2 children. I oppose bill SB135/HB87 and urge you to please vote no. I believe that parental rights should not be taken away from the parents. 16-year-old children cannot vote. They cannot buy alcohol. They cannot join the military or buy cigarettes. As a society, we have agreed that they need parental support until age 18.

Thank you,
Olga Yefimov,
North Potomac, MD 20878

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Jaime Brooke

Oppose

Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you as a very concerned mother. I am asking you to PLEASE not support this bill (HB0087). I vaccinate my children, but I am VERY concerned about the potential removal of parental consent when it comes to vaccination. It is so important for medical history to be known and considered when administering vaccines. There are situations where a child/adult would not be advised to get certain vaccines, and I am fearful that teens may not be aware of their medical history, including vaccinations they have already received, and to the extent that their caretakers do and they could be put at risk for injury or worse. There are TOO many risks here that could potentially and easily happen if it is left to the child to decide. Thank you.

Jaime Brooke

Laurel, MD 20707

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Jessica Bronico

Oppose

Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Bronico and I am a concerned mother in District #5. I am writing to you regarding HB0087 Public Health - Immunizations - Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act). Please oppose this bill!

This bill is misguided at best and complete government overreach at worst. I sometimes wonder if I am still living in the United States? Why is there an attempt to strip away parental rights at every chance? How can a CHILD make an *informed* medical decision within a 10-minute doctor visit? Or better yet, where exactly will this consent take place? At proposed in-school health clinics? This is completely unacceptable.

Just as one child may have a life- threatening reaction to peanuts, while many others do not, each child reacts differently to vaccines. They are not one size fits all. This is a decision that a parent and doctor should be discussing. Not a 16-year-old child busy thinking about what outfit they are wearing to prom. Do you think these kids will be doing research on the highly controversial HPV vaccine?? And who will monitor the child for side potential side effects? It is hard enough to motivate them to do their assigned homework each day! Do you think most 16-year-olds would know and be able to explain their detailed medical history, family medical history, contraindications, etc? They are not even trusted to VOTE at 16!! The idea of minor consent is outrageous.

Please do the right thing and oppose HB0087.

Respectfully,
Jessica Bronico
District #5

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Jessica Helms

Oppose

Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing in opposition to HB87 and SB135, minor consent to medical procedures.

I have serious concerns. I grew up in New York State and wasn't even able to purchase superglue or spray paint for school projects, without a parent. Minors need parental permission to get tattoos and piercings before the age of 18, or to go to an R rated movie. In all honestly, I think needing parental permission before they are able to do any of these things is a good idea considering the Tide Pod fiasco we all saw in the news recently. While previous generations may have been more mature, those following seem to have absolutely no common sense. While the bill drafters intentions were to have a health care provider involved in the decision making process for these vaccines, those medical professionals won't be footing the bill for the medical procedures those teens undergo. They also may not have access to a full and accurate medical history which could have devastating consequences.

Just recently, we saw a young lady in Baltimore was given a birth control implant without her mother's permission. She suffered horrible side effects and since her parents didn't know about the implant necessary care was delayed. We can't take incidents like this lightly. Had her mother known, she could have helped her daughter make the best medical decisions for her and gotten her appropriate care elsewhere. Lowering the age of consent doesn't seem to have helped in this case, but actually made things worse. Here is a link to a local news article regarding this incident: <https://fox43.com/2019/10/02/teen-given-birth-control-implant-at-maryland-school-without-parents-permission/>

I am also including links to several other articles that may be of interest. Each of these highlights something a teen or group of teens has done in the past that highlights their need of parental involvement in their decision making. Teens are impulsive and should not be left to their own devices. I have also included a link to an article that discusses infection caused by vaccinations given last year. Parents were asked to watch their child for adverse effects for three months following vaccination as they had not been stored properly. If teens are obtaining vaccinations without parental knowledge, then they may not receive the help they need in a timely manner or know to get re-vaccinated should the case call for it (article linked here: <https://local12.com/news/local/contaminated-vaccines-distributed-in-kentucky-ohio-and-indiana?fbclid=IwAR2EjKWPYHcpNQOAOZsvAgmoUsfLcyAx3GKvlj9vLMjDI7-0At2fBoLJQBY>)

- Teens using a penny and phone charger to start fires, 2020: <https://nypost.com/2020/01/23/ridiculous-tiktok-penny-challenge-is-a-huge-fire-hazard/>
- Fire Challenge, 2019: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/parenting/2019/10/04/fire-challenge-michigan-boy-treated-burns-social-media-stunt/3862622002/>
- Teens eating Tide pods, 2018: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/tide-pod-challenge-ingesting-detergent-risks/>
- Condom Snorting Challenge, 2018: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2018/04/02/condom-snorting-challenge-every-parents-worst-nightmare/477431002/>

- Choking game, 2018: <https://time.com/5189584/choking-game-pass-out-challenge/>
- Car Surfing Challenge, 2018: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6438049/Parents-boy-died-car-surfing-Uber-speak-out.html>
- Skin Eraser Challenge, 2017: <https://www.today.com/health/eraser-challenge-what-parents-need-know-about-craze-t109100>
- Duct Tape Challenge, 2016: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2016/01/27/duct-tape-challenge-viral-washington-injury/79392514/>
- Kylie Jennings Duck Lips Challenge and damage caused by it, 2015: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/people/2015/04/21/kylie-jenner-challenge-teens-bruised-plumped-lips/26114555/>
- Condoms as water-balloon dropped on friend's head challenge, 2015: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/nov/25/condom-challenge-teens-internet>
- Teens eating large amounts of cinnamon and winding up in the hospital in the cinnamon challenge, 2012: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/popular-cinnamon-challenge-has-potential-to-be-deadly/>
- Salt and Ice Challenge, 2012: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ice-and-salt-challenge-leaves-12-year-old-pittsburgh-boy-with-second-degree-burns/>

Teens lack the skills necessary to determine if something is a good idea or is actually detrimental to their health. They should not be making their own medical decisions. If anything, this highlights their impulsivity and begs the question, "How would teens potentially abuse incentives offered for vaccinations?" We've all seen the flu shot incentive signs posted at Walgreens, CVS, and Target pharmacies promising \$5 gift cards, colas, or other incentives to those who get a flu shot. If they go to get a flu shot at Target for a \$5 gift card, and then go to CVS and get another for a free cola, who is to know that they have now been vaccinated more than once? What safeguards are in place to protect teens from overvaccination? Who pays for these shots (or any other medical procedure) the teen undergoes?

I would like to close this letter by including this piece on the impulsive nature of teens. Upon reading this you'll note that the supreme court outlawed the death penalty for those under 18 due to their impulsive nature: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/teens-brains-key-to-their-impulsiveness/> You'll note this statement, "By around 15 or 16, the parts of the brain that arouse a teen emotionally and make him pay attention to peer pressure and the rewards of action - the gas pedal - are probably all set. But the parts related to controlling impulses, long-term thinking and resistance to peer pressure - the brake, mostly in the frontal lobes - are still developing." The article also states, "Experts say that even at ages 16 and 17, when compared to adults, juveniles on average are more: impulsive,...likely to take risks,...reactive to stress,...vulnerable to peer pressure,...[and] prone to focus on short-term payoffs..." Teens are not mentally able to weigh the pros and cons of medical decisions without the input of their caregivers. I oppose HB87 and SB135.

Thank you and Please Oppose HB 87,
 Jessica Helms
 Capitol Heights, MD 20743

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Meredith Lovell-Thayer

Oppose

Dear Members of the HGO Committee,

As a parent of four minor children I am writing you in concern of the language in HB0087. I don't understand why this bill has not been pulled already as other states have already pulled theirs due to the violation of medical and parental freedoms.

" Authorizing a health care provider to provide an immunization to a minor without the consent of certain individuals if the minor is at least 16 years of age and consents to the immunization and the health care provider determines the minor is mature and capable of giving informed consent with regard to the immunization; authorizing a health care provider to provide an immunization to a minor under certain provisions of the Act whether or not a parent is not reasonably available or objects to the provision of the immunization; etc."

Which "certain individuals" does this bill elude to? Guardians? Parents? It doesn't outline which legal aspects of care of a minor will be dismissed or not. This leaves this up to whom to determine which "certain individuals" will maintain medical decisions for minors or not? They go on to state a parent but it definitely leaves things open ended.

Why the age 16 as age of consent? You have to be 18 to vote in Maryland. You now have to be 21 to purchase tobacco products and alcohol. Why do we deem a 16 year old capable of making medical decisions but not able to vote? Not able to make a decision on tobacco or alcohol consumption? Just because sexual consent laws are set for 16 does not mean a child is capable of making medical decisions at that age. This shows that the bill is geared towards pushing HPV vaccination. It has already become a hard push in Maryland.

Which leads me into informed consent. Our laws currently limit things for minors based on age, for good reason. Their frontal lobes, impulse control, are not fully developed. What information is going to be given to ensure an informed decision is made? Maturity level is subjective is it not? HB0087 gives legally unaccountable individuals the power to persuade minor children to get vaccinated without the knowledge or consent of their parents. Doctors and medical workers should never be able to coerce impressionable minor children into giving "consent" to use of a pharmaceutical product or medical procedure that could cause injury or death without parental knowledge and consent. Should an adverse vaccine reaction occur, parents alone would be left to physically, emotionally and financially take care of a disabled or chronically ill child. The law does not outline that the provider is to have medical history, be the child's regular pediatrician, or even have a previous relationship with the child or family.

Many children do not know (or care to know) the extent of their medical history. Some children don't know their history due to being in foster care or adopted. Our Latvian bonus daughter couldn't tell you her medical history or when her last vaccinations took place. She will be 16 in October, speaks 4 languages, and is highly intelligent. As a mother I can tell you when my child last had a fever or a medication. When they last had a cold and were hospitalized and why.

Maryland has one of the highest rates of vaccine compliance. With many walk-in clinics and urgent care parents have access and ability to take children to be seen on their discretion. So, pushing the misinformation that this is to make things easier for working parents is false. Access isn't an issue nor is compliance within our state.

What this does do is it takes away parental rights to make medical decisions for their children. HB0087 goes against the Nation's long-standing principle that parents have a fundamental right to raise their children without undue adverse interference by the State as set forth in numerous U.S. Supreme Court

decisions. The Supreme Court found that, "deeply rooted in our Nation's history and tradition, is the belief that the parental role implies a substantial measure of authority over one's children. Indeed, "constitutional interpretation has consistently recognized that the parents' claim to authority in their own household to direct the rearing of their children is basic in the structure of our society."

HB0087 is a blatant attempt by the state to strip parents of their legal right to make informed decisions about vaccination for their minor children and hand that legal right to doctors and medical workers, who have no liability or accountability for what happens to the child after vaccination. HB0087 is a violation of parents' constitutional right to raise their children without undue interference from the state.

Thank you for your time,
Meredith Lovell-Thayer
Cumberland MD 21502

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Ruth Goetz

Oppose

Dear Delegates,

Please do not vote to take a parent's rights away. Medical decisions should be made by the parent for children under 18 years of age. Once an age is mandated by law, only time will lower the age limit to take away parent's rights.

Sincerely,

Ruth Goetz
Baltimore, MD 21208
District 11

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Diane Kavanagh

Oppose

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

I oppose this bill because it puts children in our state at risk. This concerns me as a parent of two because there is already so much that a 16-year-old child can't do. They can't vote, buy alcohol (or cigarettes) or join the military. As a society, we have agreed that they need parental support until age 18. I can't believe some states have no minimum age at all. That upsets me deeply -- it's like chipping away at parental rights and putting more stress on children. Any vaccinations should be given by a family physician with parental consent.

Diane Kavanagh
Forest Hill, MD 21050

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Krista Epperly, epperleykl@gmail.com

Oppose

To whom this may concern,

My name is Krista Epperley and I am writing to make my voice count pertaining this upcoming bill that states, minors as young as 16 could negate parental consent to be vaccinated.. I am opposed to this bill, and the simple reason behind this, is that, as young adolescents they are still not fully equipped to make true decisions with the wisdom that comes from experience. We have laws in place for minors of the same age not being allowed to marry, without parental consent. Also, we have upped the age of consent, and now at 21 you can purchase cigarettes. Cigarettes, with some of the same harsh chemicals , some actually worse,"the people" now desire to strip parents ability to intervene on their child's behalf pertaining vaccines. This in itself, is hypocrisy, I believe, to fit a bigger agenda. Although I can not prove the former statement, it all really boils down to this, there is an age that has been placed on people to consider them an adult, and for good reason. Even at 18, with some, there is a lack of maturity for life choices.This is my argument, and my prayer, that you would listen to reason and hear the people opposed to this bill. It is a slow fade if we start giving consent to minors and negate the God given authority of parents. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Krista Epperley.

Minor Consent:

I am a concerned parent writing in opposition to this bill. I want to be able to make these medical decisions for my children with their primary care physicians and specialists. As parents, alongside these medical professionals, we know their detailed medical histories, any contraindications as a result, and our family medical histories that give important information in the medical decisions we make. I do not believe that minors, including my children, are able to have full informed consent to medical procedures, including immunizations, without keen understanding and knowledge of the aforementioned histories. They need the support of their parents with their primary care physicians to do so. I oppose this bill as medical procedures and immunizations should remain the consideration of parents in relationship with their doctors.

Ashley Collevocchio
3510 Elm Ave
Baltimore, MD 21211

I am opposed to the government removing parental rights for their children in any way, including removing parental choice for any individual vaccine. Maryland voted that people cannot buy cigarettes until they are 21 because of the health consequences, yet this bill is contradicting that very thought by saying teenagers can make health decisions regarding vaccines. How is a teenager supposed to read and understand the pages and pages of vaccine inserts and consider possible side effects that most adults can't even read through? I study each and every vaccine individually, read every insert and discuss in great detail with their trusted pediatrician prior to acceptance or refusal of any individual vaccine. As long as they are in my care and under my insurance I should be the one that has final say over what is injected into their bodies and if/when.

Heather LoSchiavo
Hagerstown, MD

Dear Delegate Korman and all respective members of the House of Delegates,

I am shocked and saddened to hear of your recent filing of the HB0087 Minor Consent Bill and would like you to know that I adamantly oppose this bill and hope you will reconsider pulling this bill as Virginia recently pulled a similar bill.

Children are not considered to be legal adults until the age of 18 in our American society. Children that are 16 do not have a driver's license, they cannot buy cigarettes, they cannot vote, they cannot join the military, they cannot buy and consume alcohol legally, but yet this bill implies they can make medical decisions on their own and with out a parent's consent. I do not feel this bill is appropriate and/or necessary.

I am a mother of two children and I find this bill to be an egregious affront to my parental rights. One of my children has a myriad of health issues that are quite complex and intricate, including brain inflammation, and autoimmune disorders. How is one going to ascertain this and assess the risk of possibly adversely affecting his health within a 15-20 minute assessment. Furthermore, if a vaccine is given and I am not made aware of this and he would happen to have a serious and/or life threatening reaction, how would I know what happened to my child? I wouldn't have a clue. Is this fair to me as a parent? Who will be held liable for any negative consequences of vaccination without my consent? What happens if a child gets a duplication of a vaccine they already had because they are at some clinic where there is no vaccination record on file. Lastly, who will pay for this vaccination, if the 16 year old isn't with their parent when vaccinated? Will the parent's insurance be billed without consent and authorization?

Would you really want this bill for your own children and family? Do you really want to prematurely take away a parent's rights? These types of medical discussions and decisions should be made with the parent, the doctor and the child up until the age of 18.

I do not believe this bill is in the best interests of the families here in Maryland and I hope that you will pull this bill immediately.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Tracy B Barr

My name is Jennifer Gusilatar and I am a mom of three. We live in Finksburg, Maryland. I am writing you today as a concerned parent advocating for parental rights. I urge you to oppose this bill HB0087 Public Health – Immunizations - Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act). This is a bill we are seeing in states across the nation. Maryland's own HB66 set the age at 14. Other states have tried 12. Some states have had no minimum age at all. This is the chipping away of parental rights and slippery slope of minimum age requirements.

My second concern is for children with food allergies. Two of my children have severe allergies to eggs and cannot receive a flu shot. They know to ask about their egg allergy for anything they eat...will they ask if the vaccine contains a food allergen?

A third concern I have is that as a society, we have agreed that children need parental support until the age of 18. At 16 they cannot vote, buy alcohol, join the military or buy cigarettes. I find it strange that we would give them authority over their medical decisions, which can greatly impact their health and the rest of their lives. Minor children are extremely unlikely to know and be able to express their detailed medical history, family medical history, contradictions, etc.

Thank you for your time,

Jennifer Gusilatar

District 5

Dear Delegate,

I am writing to oppose this bill. It's not safe for the children in our state. Please vote no.

Thanks,

Linda Wingate
Manchester, MD