

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,
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