

My name is Steve Bress. I have been a Maryland resident for much more than 50 years. I urge you to vote no on SB18. It is not in the best interests of Maryland residents.

As to one of the many specific problem areas of SB18, it has no mandatory language for informed consent, nor is there a requirement that a parent/guardian consent to the child's medical procedure. An adult caregiver, per the bill's wording, could be construed as a relative, therapist, doctor, or even a teacher. Possibly even a neighbor taking a bunch of kids on a field trip. All of these people would suddenly have the ability to make potentially dangerous medical decisions on behalf of the child. These caregivers cannot possibly be informed enough about the child's medical history or even current medical condition to be able to make such a decision. This is one of the reasons that medical decisions are safest when it is a decision made in discussion between the parents/guardians and the child's doctor(s).

Additionally, there is no section for mandatory VAERS reporting, with associated consequences for non-compliance, such as loss of license, in the tragic case where an injury occurs or may have occurred. If the Pharmacist is going to replace the doctor, they should also be responsible for reporting the injuries that they cause. After all, the point of this bill is to move these procedures out of the doctor's office, which would make the pharmacist the likely first point of contact for any adverse event.

Informing the underaged recipient and their "caregiver" that they should go find a real doctor if there is a problem doesn't actually accomplish much, other than trying to shift the liability away from the pharmacist. In the scenario laid out in this bill, the unfortunate vaccine recipient would most likely end up in the emergency room. There is no actual language in this bill requiring that the minor's parents or guardians be informed of the medical procedure performed on their child. This presents a couple of problems. One is that the parents would not be aware of the nature of the injury while attempting to receive treatment. The second is that if the parents are not aware that the problem is a vaccine injury, the shortened statutory time limit on filing a claim with the NVICP would likely prevent compensation. This makes the parents solely responsible for the outcome of a procedure performed without their consent.

There is currently no emergency that requires this bill. Just because the pharmacies may have enjoyed some extra income during Covid does not mean that safety and the "integrity" of the vaccine program should be sacrificed in this manner.

There is no such thing as a 100% safe medical procedure. No matter how often the phrase "safe and effective is repeated," it does not suddenly become true. Without a parental consent requirement for medical procedures, a minor has no advocate that understands the details of the minor's health and the risks posed by the procedure. Contests, bounties and other forms of manipulation are not reasonable when it comes to invasive medical procedures. What is

reasonable is informed consent along with doctor and parental involvement. I urge you to vote against SB18 as it endangers children and their rights, along with parental rights.

I wrote the following for the last time a bill such of this was presented a couple of years ago, and it applies virtually unchanged today. (A couple of items have had to be updated from the past, as Shoppers Food Warehouse has gotten out of the Pharmacy business.)

SB732 has as its basic premise that a Pharmacist should take the place of a highly trained and experience medical professional when it comes to prescribing and administering vaccines, and the local pharmacy is an appropriate venue for such administration. I must, therefore, assume that the sponsors have never actually set foot in a commercial pharmacy, such as CVS, or a pharmacy within a grocery store, such as might be found in a Giant Foods.

Given that, I would be pleased to share my experiences with both types of pharmacies. I won't be naming names, but my experiences have been similar amongst a wide variety of retail pharmacy locations.

- The Pharmacist gave me a prescription that required refrigeration. It was in the massive pile of other prescriptions and nowhere near the fridge. I was asked if I wanted it anyway. I suggested that I felt more comfortable with a properly maintained prescription. In the case of this particular prescription, it would simply have been ineffective. If a vaccine had been cared for in this manner, it could be deadly.
- I had to intervene in a dispute between a patient and the pharmacist. She was berating and threatening the staff. For some reason, they were unable or unwilling to have the woman removed. Had I allowed her to continue to harass my pharmacists, I would not have expected to get the right medication. I certainly would not have wanted one of them to give me a vaccine at that time, given the high levels of agitation that she caused.
- Pharmacies have no ability to understand medically complex individuals. No matter how many times I explain allergies to the inactive ingredients in the drugs, they still will make a substitution, often without informing me, with a drug to which one of my family members is allergic.
- On that topic, since pharmacists cannot track and do not care about allergies, they certainly cannot be trusted to inquire, understand, and act on allergy information provided by a potential patient. Which assumes that the patient, who may be a minor under this bill, is capable of understanding that it is their responsibility to inform the pharmacist about allergies and other embarrassing personal information. The patient's doctor, of course, should already know and take proper precautions.
- Bounties for medical procedures are unacceptable, but they are commonplace at pharmacies. False advertising is rampant as well. The shots aren't "free" unless the

pharmaceutical companies have all suddenly gotten very generous. (While there is usually an asterisk that says the pharmacist will explain how it is free, it is still not free.)

- I have witnessed many, many vaccinations given at local pharmacies and given the small amount of square footage allocated to the medical procedure section, I have heard the interaction between the pharmacist and the patient. I have NEVER, not once, as in it hasn't happened, heard the pharmacist give the patient the information that would allow for informed consent.
- Speaking of lack of space, I have never seen a bed for a patient to lie down upon for when he or she is about to pass out after vaccination. This would be uncomfortable and dangerous.
- On that topic, drive through vaccinations sound like a great idea until someone passes out while driving.
- One pharmacist substituted a generic drug for a name brand drug, for which I paid a significant amount of money. It did not do its job. When I found out what had happened and talked to the pharmacist, he would not check inventory to prove my claim. Later on, after a change in management, I found out that I wasn't the only one. There is no reason to believe that this wouldn't happen with vaccines. A saline solution is far cheaper than the actual vaccine. Should a patient get sick, it would just be assumed to be a simple vaccine failure.

There is no such thing as a 100% safe medical procedure. No matter how often the phrase "safe and effective is repeated," it does not suddenly become true. Without a parental consent requirement for medical procedures, a minor has no advocate that understands the details of the minor's health and the risks posed by the procedure. Contests, bounties and other forms of manipulation are not reasonable when it comes to invasive medical procedures. What is reasonable is informed consent along with doctor and parental involvement. I urge you to vote against this bill that weakens parental rights and endangers children.

Steve Bress

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