

To: Senate Health and Human Services Committee

From: Robert T Griffith Jr MD

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Fellow American Academy of Pediatrics

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Testimony in SUPPORT of S 2568

Good afternoon,

I am a pediatrician who has practiced primary care pediatrics in Rhode Island for more than 40 years. I write as a representative of the RI Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics in support of Senate Bill 2568 requiring that routine adult and childhood vaccine recommendations be based on evidence-based, medically-sound scientific research. A locally appointed committee will review information from national organizations such as the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Family Practitioners (AAFP) in order to make the final recommendations.

Routine adult and childhood vaccines are remarkably safe, carefully developed with scientifically rigorous oversight and have saved trillions of dollars in both direct and indirect health care costs. Vaccines have saved MILLIONS of children from death or chronic disability. I have cared for patients who have died or become significantly disabled after contracting a vaccine preventable illness. Unfortunately, our current federal administration has raised unfounded concerns about the safety and necessity of some important vaccines.

Passage of this bill will help assure the health and safety of our child and adult population. 40 years ago, I cared for a 13-month-old child whose parents had taken her to a “chickenpox” party in an attempt to give her “natural immunity.” Chickenpox vaccine was not available at that time and getting chickenpox was viewed as a rite of passage. The child developed chicken pox as expected which caused a chickenpox brain infection which ultimately led to her death. This individual could have become a productive member of society today had she received the chicken pox vaccine. Since the introduction of chickenpox vaccine, it has become a disease which medical students and younger physicians have never seen!

Thank you for taking the time to review this testimony and I look forward to your anticipated support of S2568

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