

Nancy asked that “somebody else” voice their two cents worth on the vaccine issue? I guess I will be that somebody else. I respect those who have reservations about childhood vaccinations, and my heart goes out to the parents of a child with autism. This is tragic, no matter the cause.

Below are my responses to each point Nancy raised. I have inserted them in Nancy’s text for continuity:

The problem is when you start forcing things with risks on people with serious penalties like your child not being able to attend public school. RESPONSE: There are two issues here. The issue of “force” is a Constitutional issue, and the Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled on the government’s (federal, state, and local) mandate to promote the general welfare. I will address the “risk” issue below.

However, there is something really sad lurking underneath this controversy. And that is that there is too little trust in the pharmaceutical industry and too little trust in some legislators, not to be making deals that financially enrich them at the expense of some in the public. It is a sad state of affairs, but that's where we're at with trust. RESPONSE: If you read or listen to the anti-vaccine arguments you will inevitably hear the “big-pharma” argument. It is almost as if those who make the profit argument against the pharmaceutical industry are actually against profit. Or is it that they believe profit is good in the grocery business, the automobile industry, the dry cleaning business, and almost every other enterprise ... but not in making pharmaceuticals. Perhaps they don't know, or care not to know, that the pharmaceutical industry makes much, much less on vaccines than on drugs to treat illness ... some of which could have been prevented by a vaccine.

If people can get such extreme responses to vaccinations that a totally healthy child becomes severely disabled the night after they receive one, then even if one fifth of the people in that hall were correct that vaccinations booster shots, or the full vaccine schedule, were the reason that their children became disabled, we have to measure that against the risk of measles, flu, and other even more serious diseases. RESPONSE: Unfortunately, these reports of overnight adverse reactions to a vaccine continue to spread. Part of this is because a parent actually believes it, and part of it is because those against vaccines want to perpetuate these stories. Serious adverse reactions are very, very rare. Who does the public want to believe? The American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC, and 99 percent of legitimate medical and scientific organizations ... or the few groups who oppose vaccines but get a lot of sensational news coverage? I'm not claiming that there are NO adverse reactions. But almost every person who claimed their child had an adverse reaction, also claimed that this reaction induced autism. This has been thoroughly tested and re-tested. It has been proven false.

There have been vaccines for polio, diphtheria, and smallpox for decades that we haven't seen any trouble with. But there are new vaccines that are variable in their efficacy and their risks. This is what I gathered from the hearing, which I will post the

link for. RESPONSE: Those opposing vaccines were very vocal. I've heard most of their arguments many times over. "Yes, some vaccines are OK, but I want to choose." Or "My children can't handle all of these chemicals and poisons." They believe they know more than the American Academy of Pediatrics, or they believe the American Academy of Pediatrics is a co-conspirator with "big-pharma".

As we heard from a pediatrician on one panel, 90% of children who got whooping cough this year, received the pertussis vaccine, and people who got flu shots got the flu.

RESPONSE: The vaccine for pertussis, tetanus, and diphtheria is very good, but the pertussis part doesn't give life-long immunity. In addition, the current pertussis vaccine isn't as effective as the old one. Unfortunately, the old one caused more discomfort. And, as you heard from the parents, "We don't want anything to hurt our baby." The flu vaccine is a crapshoot. The makers try to guess which strains are most likely to appear each year. Some years they guess correctly and some years they don't.

Listening to the pro and the con panels takes about 40 minutes and it's not only fascinating. It gives you the benefit of hearing both sides of expert testimony.

RESPONSE: Unfortunately, even on both sides, you heard very little expert testimony.

The problem is and I heard a legislator mention it, which is, he didn't have enough information in the small time of the hearing to make an informed decision and I don't think any of us have that. RESPONSE: I believe very strongly that this person doesn't have enough time to think about anything.

I think a team of dispassionate impartial epidemiologists and medical experts should determine vaccine schedules and as long as there is any risk involved, there must also be choices. RESPONSE: Any risk! There is risk in going to school also. Ask the parents who had children killed at Columbine or Sandy Hook.

But I don't believe that choice should carry the heavy penalty of having to remove your child from public school, if you cannot afford to replace that education or if it is important to you for your child to be socialized with other children. RESPONSE: If we want choices, we must also take the responsibility for those choices. If you don't want to put your child in a car seat, you might have an injured child or a traffic ticket. An educated guess would be that every parent who I heard testify at this hearing could find a way to educate their child.

What I gathered from this hearing is we don't have a well devised vaccine schedule that has been scrutinized closely enough to see if the risks don't outweigh the benefits, and I believe where there is risk there must be choice. RESPONSE: Here again, two issues. First, we do have a vaccine schedule that has been scrutinized over and over. If the parent and the child's pediatrician think there are too many shots too soon, then there is still plenty of time to complete the required schedule before Kindergarten. Second. Risk? Everything in life carries some risk. Choice is a very vague term. Who chooses to be born? Who chooses to get polio or a spinal cord injury?

And I need to know whether the vaccine schedules are being determined by science or influenced by aggressive drug company promotion to the legislature. RESPONSE: No legislature that I am aware of has ever determined the vaccine schedule, other than to require a proof of vaccination before entering public school.

If I had a child, I would only want to give them the most tried-and-true proven vaccine schedule that had lasted the test of time and had an extremely low incidence of risk for serious vaccine injuries and have my right to forgo childhood disease vaccinations that might have been tested less and promoted by those would profit from them.

RESPONSE: The present vaccine schedule has been tested very well. Again, almost every vaccine horror story is about a child who got so and so vaccine and developed autism. Any child with autism is tragic, but the vast, vast body of evidence does not link vaccines to autism. And, if you want “only” vaccines that “had lasted the test of time” then what do you use to decide what that time is? One year, ten years, twenty years?

ONE ADDED NOTE: At this hearing, and the one for the Senate, I heard the same twelve year old anti-vaccine boy say, “I am twelve years old. I am perfectly healthy, and I have never had a vaccine.” I found myself yelling at the television ... figuratively. I was thinking, “You stupid idiot! I could have said the same thing when I was your age. Just wait a few months!”

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