



Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Testimony by Lauren Gambill, MD
Senate Bill 2119 by Sen. Kevin Sparks
April 8, 2025

Honorable Committee members:

I'm Dr. Lauren Gambill, a pediatrician in Austin, representing the Texas Medical Association and Texas Pediatric Society, testifying on Senate Bill 2119.

Texas medicine has a long history of working with faith-affiliated medical schools and hospitals. We believe a careful balance in vaccine policies is possible – one that respects medical students' religious beliefs while protecting patients.

Medical students are in and out of patients' rooms while on rotation, participating in the necessary training that builds the next generation of physicians. It's exciting to see medical students begin this journey and start seeing patients. But as physicians, our priority is the health of our patients. When someone seeks health care, the expectation is that those who tend to them will not expose them to preventable illnesses. They come to us to get well, not to get sick.

Vaccine-preventable diseases can be devastating for sick patients. This is especially concerning for newborns in the NICU or immunocompromised patients battling cancer. Sterile environments are taken so seriously that flowers and balloons aren't allowed in the NICU because of the risk of bringing in germs. When a person chooses not to get vaccinated, no matter the reason, it too heightens risk.

Texas is still fighting a measles outbreak that has taken the life of two children and hospitalized dozens of other people. If an unvaccinated student is unknowingly exposed, they could infect many patients in the weeks before that student experiences symptoms.

With physicians at high risk of exposure to vaccine-preventable illnesses, it is for the protection of both patients and medical students that current vaccine requirements exist.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.