



STATE SENATOR
Eric Wimberger
DISTRICT 30

January 21, 2021

Senate Committee on Human Services, Children and Families
Testimony in favor of Senate Bill 6

Mr. Chairman and members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 6, a bill designed to get our kids back in the classroom as soon as possible. We are the better part of a year into this pandemic, and we know much more now about the risks of the virus than we did at the start. However, in many cases we continue to act as though what we know hasn't changed, and this applies directly to our schools.

The Centers for Disease Control states on their website, "It is critical for schools to **open as safely and as quickly as possible for in-person learning**. Schools play an important role in children's educational achievement, health, and wellbeing. Working with state, tribal, local, and territorial health officials, schools can also play an important role in slowing the spread of COVID-19 while ensuring that children have a safe and healthy learning environment."¹

Dr. Danielle Dooley, medical director at Children's National Hospital in Washington, DC told NPR in October, "As a pediatrician, I am really seeing the negative impacts of these school closures on children... She ticked off mental health problems, hunger, obesity due to inactivity, missing routine medical care and the risk of child abuse — on top of the loss of education. "Going to school is really vital for children. They get their meals in school, their physical activity, their health care, their education, of course."²

The same article noted, "Despite widespread concerns, two new international studies show no consistent relationship between in-person K-12 schooling and the spread of the coronavirus."

In December, Dr. Fauci went so far as to say that in-person schooling should be "the default position", and that COVID "among children and from children is not really very big at all... so let's try to get the kids back."

Parents across the state are incredibly concerned. In northeast Wisconsin, many districts have implemented hybrid learning models, with partial virtual and in-person learning. Others, like the Green Bay Area School District, have thus far remained entirely virtual, though I am glad to hear the district plans to offer some in-person learning in the coming weeks. A parent group called "Open Green Bay Area Public Schools" has more than 2,000 members, and I hear from many of them daily. They can see their kids falling behind in real time and are desperate to keep them on track. Given what we know about the low risk of COVID spread in schools, it is time we open our classrooms back up. The risk is not non-existent, but it is not great enough to continue to deny our kids a proper education any longer.

That is why my colleagues and I have introduced Senate Bill 6. It accomplishes two things: requiring a 2/3 vote of any school board to close a building to instruction for more than 14 days, and requiring schools to offer a full-time, in-person education option once vaccination phase 1b is concluded and our teachers are inoculated.

Thank you for your time this morning, and I am happy to answer your questions.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/decision-tool.html>

² <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/21/925794511/were-the-risks-of-reopening-schools-exaggerated>

DAYSRING

BAPTIST CHURCH AND SCHOOLS



Thursday, January 21, 2021

Dear Committee Members,

I appreciate all of you working so hard on behalf of the citizens of our state. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I'm writing to encourage you on the importance of SB 4,5,6, & 7.

We are a Church with a Preschool and K-12 School. We are located on 36 acres in Town of Delafield. If you drive to Milwaukee, you see our campus on the south side of I-94 as you enter into Waukesha.

I'm sure you understand why SB7 is extremely important to all churches in Wisconsin. A "Church" is a "Called out Assembly", meaning in order for us to be the "Church", we must "assemble" in person. Online meetings may work for a short time, but failure to consistently assemble is a failure of the "Church" to do its work. Assembling together is a main tenant of our faith. To not assemble goes against the will and desire of our Lord as taught in the Bible.

We believe the Church is essential, and no government agency has the unlimited power to force churches to close indefinitely. As we all know so well: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the exercise thereof."

In my experience this past year, ALL the churches in our area DID want to cooperate with the government in mitigating the spread of Covid. I do not know of a single church in our area that was disrespectful or flippant about following the guidelines setup by our government. We have followed all the rules and went to extreme lengths and great expense to adhere to CDC guidelines to protect our students and members. The Church desires to work alongside of and peacefully with our government.

Covid lockdowns have led to an alarming rise in overdose and suicides in our state. One of the main outreach programs that our church offers is an "Addiction Recovery Program". This program meets in person on Fridays where we work with "Functioning Addicts" in our area. Hundreds of people have come to our meetings. Many people have found freedom and recovery. I'm proud that our community calls DaySpring the "Church of the Former Addict". This year, due to Covid and the "Stay Home" orders, we have seen a spike in our addiction recovery students "falling off the wagon" and getting deeper into their addiction. This year alone, we have had 3 students die of overdose and suicide. In comparison, we haven't had an overdose or suicide death among our students for the past 4 years. Assembling together in person is essential to people that struggle with mental health and addictive tendencies.

Thank you again for your service to our great state.

Daniel Reehoff

Founder & Lead Pastor

Pastor Daniel Reehoff

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*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:
it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."*

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak before this committee on some Senate Bills 4, 5, 6, and 7.

I Strongly urge you to approve and pass each of these bills through the Legislature. Our liberties have been encroached upon more than any other time in our nations history as they have been in these last ten months. We have seen churches unconstitutionally ordered to shutter their doors, families and groups of people told they cannot gather together, people and businesses forced to require mask compliance with respect to personal liberties, the government intrusion into people's lives, and many more specifics could be mentioned. Although these bills are not perfect, they are a start on many pieces of legislation that must be passed and signed by Governor Evers to stop and limit the encroachment of government upon our personal liberties given to us by God and spelled out in the Constitution. Far too long the legislature has sat idly by while people have faced personal liberties taken away, lockdowns and school closure have had drastic consequences on mental and physical health, and the very essence of what America is being trampled under foot.

If these bills are not passed, they will have many possible consequences that will further erode away our personal liberties, and unnecessarily put the people under pressure to make decisions that they do not want to make.

We must prohibit government officials from mandating vaccination at all levels of government, We must prohibit mandatory vaccination for employment, We must open up our schools as so many students are suffering horribly, and we must, I repeat, must forbid any future closures of places of worship and education by the government. Please remember what our state Constitution says, "The right of every person to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of conscience shall never be infringed; nor shall any person be compelled to attend, erect or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry, without consent; nor shall any control of, or interference with, the rights of conscience be permitted, or any preference be given by law to any religious establishments or modes of worship; nor shall any money be drawn from the treasury for the benefit of religious societies, or religious or theological seminaries."

In conclusion, I would like to mention that these bills should have been combined with the COVID bill instead of as stand along bills.

Thank you for listening to my thoughts and concerns regarding these bills.

Micah Roberts

Mukwonago, WI

From: Jaclyn Fradette <jaclyn.fradette@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 9:31 AM
To: Jacque, Andre <Andre.Jacque@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Subject: Senate Bill 6

Senator Jacque,

I appreciate you and the members of the Human Services, Children and Families Committee taking up this important issue.

My name is Jaclyn Fradette. I live in the Town of Chase, Oconto County, and have three children enrolled in the Pulaski Community School District. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 6.

There needs to be limits to how long a school can remain closed to in-person learning without proper evaluation. This proposed legislation encourages school boards to continually review and discuss what is best for students and families as it relates to education and the school district operations.

The bill also requires school boards to vote on extending closures. This is a good move in forcing school boards to become accountable for their actions or inaction. It appears many school boards have abdicated their authority to their school administrations during the pandemic.

Virtual learning was a challenge for many and has created social and emotional issues. I applaud you in your efforts to spare children from further long-term harm.

Our school district recently announced that we will be going back to school soon, but we need this bill to make sure we don't have future unnecessary extended closures.

Sincerely,

Jaclyn L Fradette
Mother

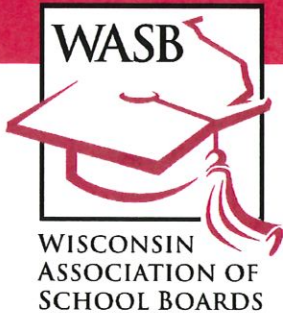
From: Stephanie H <stephaniehammar.rn@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 9:58 AM
To: Sen.Ballweg <Sen.Ballweg@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Sen.Wimberger <Sen.Wimberger@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Sen.Johnson <Sen.Johnson@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Sen.Agard <Sen.Agard@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Cc: Sen.Jacque <Sen.Jacque@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Subject: Choose your poison - SB 4,5,6, & 8 Committee on Human Services
Importance: High

Choose your poison...an experimental vaccine which currently has a 2.79% risk of a severe adverse reaction, can cause antibody dependent enhancement of disease, has no long term studies on safety, has 66 deaths reported in the U.S. to the FDA VAERS system (within days of vaccination) as of 1/7/21, and is not proven to reduce transmission of Coronavirus OR risk getting a virus that has a lethality of .008% - 2.5% depending on your age and comorbidities? That is what you are talking about today. You are talking about allowing the people of this state to pick their poison.

We must not forget that these vaccines are still experimental. The "trust science" rhetoric is ridiculous, science isn't something you believe, it is something that is PROVEN. These vaccines are not proven. They are still in a clinical trial state and that is why they have been issued an emergency use authorization and not a biological license (BLA) to distribute. It has not been granted a BLA because it does not meet the rigor of approval, it is still experimental. We must heed the warning of the 5 scientists who sat on the 22 member FDA panel to grant EUA of these vaccines and voted NO that the potential benefits do not outweigh the risks of this experimental vaccine to authorize emergency use. This is enough trusted scientific opinion to tell us we must not allow government or employers to force any person to participate in this general population clinical trial in which the risks outweigh the benefits. Using the body as a scientific vehicle is a personal choice, not the governments and certainly not the employers.

Furthermore, IF you plan to vote in favor of giving government entities and employers the power to mandate an experimental vaccine then you must allow the recipient of the vaccine an avenue for legal recourse and recovery in the event of injury. To force upon someone an experimental vaccine while holding their job over their head is black mail, but then to take zero responsibility if they suffer an injury as a result of such an ultimatum is unconscionable. You cannot have it both ways. Employers who want to mandate this as a condition of employment then must assume the liability of injury as they do with any other work related injury that occurs as a condition of employment. The fact that these manufacturers are protected from liability by our government is disgusting. Telling the American people they must take something and if they get hurt "too bad, so sad" is outright wrong. This is not American freedom; this is an egregious infringement on our rights.

A very prominent pulmonary doctor in this state said to me, "bad things can happen with the vaccine and bad things can happen with COVID". This is true and where there is this risk, one must have the freedom to choose. I urge you to vote in favor of protecting the right to choose and prohibiting any government or employer vaccine mandate. Picture yourself as one of the unlucky ones that suffers a severe life threatening adverse event from this vaccine and ask yourself if that risk is worth it to you. As



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JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Human Services, Children and Families
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Government Relations Director
DATE: January 21, 2021
RE: Opposition to Senate Bill 6, relating to: requirements for a school board to close a school building to in-person instruction for more than 14 consecutive days during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years and a school board requirement to offer a full-time, in-person option to all pupils.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am Dan Rossmiller, Government Relations Director for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), a voluntary membership association representing all 421 of Wisconsin's locally elected public school boards.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 6. The bill would create a pair of nonstatutory provisions aimed at:

- a) limiting a school board's ability to close a school building to in-person instruction or to in-person instruction for a specific grade or grades for a period that exceeds 14 consecutive days; and
- b) requiring a school board to offer a full-time, in person option to all pupils enrolled in the district by no later than 15 days after the date on which the Department of Health Services indicates that COVID-19 vaccinations may be allocated to individuals in phase 1c. of the state's vaccination prioritization guidelines (unless the school board votes unanimously not to offer a full-time, in-person option to some or all pupils enrolled in the school district).

Not only do these provisions interfere with local control of the district by the duly elected school board, but they also substitute the prerogatives of lawmakers in Madison for the judgment of local school board members, elected by their communities. As an organization deeply wedded to advocating on behalf of local control, the WASB and its members are extremely concerned about the precedent the attempts by the legislature to micromanage local decision making would create.

With regard to the first of these provisions, 14 days is an arbitrary time period that may be divorced from sound medical advice and guidance or the school district's ability to adequately staff its school buildings for in-person instruction. This provision would become effective immediately upon publication of this bill, should it become law.

The 14-day limitation in the bill does not accommodate the reality that, as one example, a school or a grade level in a school building could be subject to multiple, overlapping cases or exposures. The 14-day limitation also does not acknowledge that the advice/recommendations provided by the local county health department/medical advisor may have for longer timelines than those listed in the bill. Operating in-person instruction contrary to such advice or recommendations could subject a school district to potential liability should a student or family member contract the virus.

The arbitrary requirement for a two-thirds vote of the board could allow a minority of board members to force a district into an instructional model that may not be in the best interest of the district and its staff. It would also allow a minority of board members to potentially overrule the recommendations of public health officials. Having a minority of an elected body dictate such health and safety decisions is not sound governance.

With regard to the second of these provisions, there is unlikely to be any type of strong or predictable correlation between “the date on which the Department of Health Services indicates that COVID-19 vaccinations may be allocated to individuals in phase 1c.” and an appreciable increase in vaccinations actually being administered to school age individuals.

The current two-dose approach to vaccination, when combined with the logistics of vaccine supply and distribution, means that it may be a few months between the first possible date that school-age individuals, as a complete cohort, are eligible to seek a vaccination and the date that enough students in any school have developed the full immune response as a result of being vaccinated to make a difference in the potential risks.

In other words, the decision to allocate the Phase 1c. vaccine doses is not the same as administering those doses. Since students would receive their vaccinations in the Phase 1c. allocation, this bill would almost certainly require school boards to provide in-person instruction as an option before all or even most students have had an opportunity to receive vaccinations even if the parents of those students may wish their children to be vaccinated before returning to school for in-person instruction. In our view, the requirement to offer an in-person option in response to phase 1.c is, at a minimum, premature based on the current status of vaccination approvals.

In addition, providing both an in-person option and a virtual option places greater demands on school district staff to provide instruction via multiple modes. As a practical matter, limitations on a district’s staffing and technology may make it difficult, if not impossible, for a district to offer an in-person option if substantial numbers of parents continue to request a virtual option for their children after this provision becomes effective..

We note that while the likelihood that a district will need to resort to virtual instruction will decrease over time in direct proportion to the percentage of the district’s population that is vaccinated against the virus, at this point public opinion surveys indicate there is considerable resistance to vaccination efforts that needs to be overcome before we reach a state of “herd immunity.” Additionally, we note that the vaccines currently approved under an emergency use authorization have not yet been subjected to clinical trials on populations under age 18 and have not yet been approved by the FDA for use on those under age 16.

It is probable that there will be high variability in local circumstances at least through the end of the 2020-21 school year. School boards should retain local control to assess their unique circumstances and determine an appropriate local approach to the issues addressed by the bill.

For the above reasons, the WASB opposes the proposal before you today.