

**Testimony on EHB 1638**

**3/27/2019 Senate Health and Long-Term Care Committee**

**Cherberg SHR4**

Good morning, Chair Cleveland and members of the committee. I am Alexis Nims on behalf of Washington State PTA.

I am here in support of Engrossed House Bill 1638. PTA has been a supporter of mandatory immunizations for school-age children since the 1970s. Before the development of the measles vaccine, nearly every child in the US contracted the disease, and approximately 500 children died from measles every year. The Centers for Disease Control reported that measles had been eradicated nearly 20 years ago.

Washington is one of only 17 states that permits personal exemptions from vaccines. We are experiencing an outbreak of 74 measles cases due to unvaccinated children in Clark County, with another 10 in Oregon. We cannot let unfounded fears of these safe and effective vaccines take us backwards.

I am a prospective public health student at the University of Washington. Addressing vaccine-hesitancy and the misinformation surrounding it is a huge concern of mine and my fellow classmates. This bill will help protect our most vulnerable children.

We urge you to pass this bill out of committee. It is a crucial step to protect the health of Washington's citizens.