



January 28, 2020

Hon. Andrea Stewart Cousins
Room 330, State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins,

I write to you both as a parent and as the Mayor of the City of Rochester to express concern with several bills that are scheduled to advance through the legislative process, specifically **A973/S3899**, **A6564/S4244**, and **A6512/S4844** relating to sexual education and parental consent regarding vaccinations.

As you are well aware, vaccines save lives – and I was pleased that New York State has some of the most advanced vaccination procedures and laws in the nation. I also believe that we must do everything within our power to maintain herd immunity from dangerous diseases like the measles, which New York State saw re-emerge last year.

However, it is my sincere belief – as a parent of a young daughter – that I and other parents must maintain input and consent regarding the health of our children, especially when it comes to sexual education. It would be unconscionable for a healthcare practitioner to administer an STD vaccine to my nine year old daughter without my consent, as has been suggested in A973/S3899. We all want what is best for our children – and parents should be able to discuss these STD vaccinations with our doctor before administering the vaccine.

Vaccines are meant to stop the spread of diseases, like measles. But there is no risk to other children if my child does not receive this vaccination at the age of nine. Decisions about these vaccinations should be made by my daughter when she is of age or by her parents. I urge you to reject this legislation and protect parents' right to consent.

Additionally, I oppose A6564/S4244 and A6512/S4844, mandating schools to teach sex education beginning at kindergarten as suggested in A6512/S4844. I believe this bill strips away the rights of parents to be involved in their children's sex education, and could cause more harm than good. These types of decisions should be made between parents and teachers. Otherwise, it will cause more skepticism of elected officials and put public health professionals in a compromising position.

As a parent, I believe that a parent's right to be involved in their child's health and medical decisions is a fundamental one. And, in matters not related to mass public safety, parents should be allowed to consent to the medical treatments being given to their children. By allowing parents to choose, we will build a stronger, healthier New York that is based on trust. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (585) 428-7045.

Sincerely,

Lovely A. Warren
Mayor

cc: Senator Liz Krueger
Senator Jen Metzger

