

My name is Carol Meyer from Wichita. I have been active in politics in Kansas for many years and I am a voter. My husband and I are the parents of 4 children and grandparents to 2 children. In 1993 through 1996 I served on the Federal Advisory Commission on Childhood Vaccines as the member at large representing parents.

While I am talking, I would like you to remember that immunizations, like any medicine, are not 100% effective, 100% safe or 100% necessary. Immunizations are not without risk. Over \$2 billion has been paid by the Federal government to those injured by vaccines through the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. One of those compensated children was mine.

In 1983, my 3<sup>rd</sup> daughter, Laura, was born. When she was 6 weeks old, we went for her first well baby check-up and she received her first DPT immunization. Within 12 hours of receiving this, she had 3 seizures and a period of high-pitched crying. Our family doctor diagnosed this as an adverse reaction to the DPT immunization she received that day. From that day on, Laura continued to suffer from frequent seizures. She had seizures almost daily and on a bad day she would have many. Due to that first reaction, Laura's immune system was severely compromised and she was often in and out of the hospital for seizures that required emergency medical care to be stopped. At times in her life, she was hospitalized monthly for days at a time. Because of her reaction to the DPT immunization, Laura had severe brain damage. She never walked....never talked...and, as her doctors noted, was profoundly developmentally disabled. There was no doubt in our minds or that of her doctors that this was all a result of that first DPT immunization she received.

Because of the overwhelming evidence in her case, we submitted a claim and qualified for compensation from the Federal Trust Fund for the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program and we received compensation to help pay for her care. I know of 2 other families in Wichita who also received compensation for their children's vaccine injuries around this time and both of the children eventually died of their injuries.

Caring for a profoundly developmentally disabled child was often very difficult, but Laura also brought our family so much joy and taught us many important

lessons. Laura was a happy, smiling, beautiful child, who didn't know enough to have a care in the world. Despite her disabilities, she was loved by many for her easy going nature and bright smile.

When Laura was 11 years old, she received her MMR booster. The doctor convinced me that her compromised immune system would put her at risk for these illnesses. Again, the doctor felt the risk of the illness outweighed the risk of the vaccination. 1 week after the MMR booster injection, she suffered a status seizure...the worst seizure she had ever had and it would not stop. We called the ambulance as we had done many times before...within 1 hour, Laura was pronounced dead from cardiac and respiratory arrest. Her death certificate reads that her death was a result of a status seizure, the DPT reaction, and the MMR vaccine she had received just 1 week earlier. Our daughter Laura was gone.

This experience tested the strength of our family beyond all measure. It taught us lessons that we will never forget. After everything that has happened to our family, I am not against immunizations. But I do have to support each parent's right to immunize their child according to their own conscience. The reality is that most parents will still choose to vaccinate their children, but those who would like to selectively immunize should have that right without fear of their children being denied an education. I have two beautiful grandchildren. After hearing my story, what would you tell your daughter about vaccinating her children? Would you want to take the risk? But she has to worry, will they get into school?

This is the legacy of my daughter...To tell her story so that you know that vaccine reactions do happen...Even if they are rare, they do exist... Parents are told they must vaccinate their children for the greater good or because the benefits will outweigh the risks. For my daughter Laura, the risk became the reality... there was no benefit. For Laura, the benefit was zero and the risk was 100%.

I ask you to please support HB2094 and the right of parents to vaccinate their children according to their own conscience.

Remember Laura...Support the Conscientious Exemption Bill