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LWVSC Testimony, S.741 Voluntary vaccinations for young children

I'm a volunteer with the League of Women Voters of South Carolina, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, all-volunteer, grassroots organization dedicated to protecting the ideal that we all can participate fully in our democracy. Part of our work involves ensuring that we continue to enjoy our basic rights as citizens of this country. We oppose Senate Bill 741 that would prohibit any vaccine from being required for infants under 24 months of age. The bill allows parents to voluntarily vaccinate their infants, but no government or health authority could require vaccination for children in this age group.

Health care access is one of the SC League's top priorities. Under that umbrella, we believe the prevention of children's problems as being one of the most important strategies that can be planned and implemented on behalf of children and their families. We support services and policies that ensure children's physical, emotional, educational and health needs are met.

S.741 removes the successful strategy of requiring vaccinations for infants and toddlers who participate in public or private childcare programs. We support the rights of parents to make decisions for their children, but S.741 removes parents' rights to protect their children from exposure to disease carried by other people in public spaces.

The Infection Disease Prevention Network explains it very clearly. "But S. 741 removes the structures that ensure parents have clear, consistent information and that their infants are protected in settings parents can't control, like hospitals, daycares, church nurseries, and community spaces. When outbreaks occur, parents lose choices, because exposure happens before they can intervene."

We respectfully request that you not pass this bill.

Thank you,

Teresa Arnold

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