


LINDEE BRILL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 27th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

For Immediate Release

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Representative Brill Responds to DHS Sidestepping Vaccination Concerns

Madison – Yesterday, Dr. Ryan Westergaard, Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, conducted a press conference regarding reported measles cases in Oconto County. During the Zoom event, a bill authored by Representative Lindee Brill (R-Sheboygan Falls) and Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara (R-Fox Crossing) was mentioned. In response, Representative Brill issued the following statement:

“Throughout the conversation about the measles cases in Oconto County, Dr. Westergaard framed the narrative squarely around what he calls ‘low vaccination rates,’ linking these directly with Wisconsin parents’ right to obtain a waiver for their children from the school vaccine requirements for reasons of personal conviction, health concern, or religious belief.

“However, there was little to no discussion of why a parent might choose to seek this waiver. In fact, when a reporter specifically asked what the state was doing to urge manufacturers to separate the measles vaccine from the rubella vaccine (which is manufactured using cells from aborted children and thus the principal element of concern among many parents who seek a waiver for religious reasons) Dr. Westergaard dismissed the question, saying “To my knowledge the state has not engaged with any manufacturers on that issue.”

“This is the core issue. While the Department of Health Services is deeply concerned over low vaccination rates, it has shown little interest in understanding or resolving the sincere religious or personal objections many parents have. The religious concerns of many communities regarding the use of aborted fetal cells in vaccine production are real. Public officials should take them seriously, not dismiss them out of hand while trying harder to persuade families to make health decisions which may violate their beliefs.

“This is precisely why I introduced my bill. The rights of parents are not negotiable and ought to be reinforced, not eroded. If DHS is concerned about low vaccination rates, they should work diligently to remedy the root cause of parents’ concern regarding the vaccine, not treat their right to act in accord with that concern as an inconvenient obstacle.”

The representative may be reached at (608) 237-9127 or by email at Rep.Brill@legis.wisconsin.gov.

Representative Lindee Brill (R-Sheboygan Falls) serves the 27th Assembly District which includes portions of Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, Calumet, and Manitowoc counties.

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