

Good morning. Thank you, Senator Schroder and Representative Bratcher for including us in this hearing. My name is Jack Kall. I am a general dentist. My office is in Louisville. I am here to voice my support for the initiative to remove the state mandate for water fluoridation.

In my opinion, and from my perspective, even as a dentist, the core issue here is about freedom of choice, informed consent and whether our state government has the right to put the brains of my current and future grandchildren and yours at an increased risk of harm.

This is about so much more than whether (a state government mandate) (water fluoridation) can prevent one or two cavities in someone's teeth. Some of you, especially my dental colleagues, might wonder how a dentist could be against water fluoridation. So, here's my story.

After the first six years of my 43-year career as a dentist I began learning more about the connection between dentistry and overall health. As that process continued, I sought out training, education and mentoring about what is now recognized as the oral-systemic connection. In other words, how conditions in the mouth relate to problems in the body.

This experience created a different lens through which I tend to look at human health. Now I paid attention to the biocompatibility or safety of the materials and procedures we dentists perform. I questioned the wisdom of placing mercury fillings and fluoride in the water supply since both are known neurotoxins.

As I witnessed the growing resistance of the dental profession to these concerns, I learned about the specialty of risk assessment in the public health field. It then became clear that other fields of science have wrestled with the dilemma of deciding when risks outweigh potential benefits.

In January 1998, at an international conference involving scientists, lawyers, policy makers, and environmentalists from the U.S., Canada and Europe, a formalized statement was signed and became known as the "Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle." In it, the following advice is given: "When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof."

It turns out that dentistry's own Journal of Evidence Based Dental Practice even published an article about this in 2006. The article is titled: "What Does the Precautionary Principle Mean for Evidence-Based Dentistry?" and makes several points in the next several slides. [Discuss slides 6-10 and 10 ends with: "In the face of uncertain evidence it is important to act in a manner that protects public health". Which begs the question: should dentistry be the ultimate arbiter or authority on overall public health? I say no, that is not dentistry's wheelhouse. I strongly recommend we listen to the medical scientists who have been recently publishing their work in peer reviewed medical and science journals.

In your resources for this hearing we have provided you with a document named "Current Science on Fluoride Risk" which lists a few of these studies which show a significant loss of IQ, altered thyroid function and increase levels of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Now allow me to warn you that the dental profession typically will claim such studies are poorly designed or flawed or are junk science. First of all, studies funded by the National Institutes of Health are known by scientists to be very high quality.

Secondly, the accepted norm of the Precautionary Principle is that the proponents of water fluoridation should bear the burden of proving the safety of water fluoridation and they have not done that. And until they have done so, no government should force our water utilities to add a neurotoxin to the public water supply.

Sure, teeth are important. But so are thyroid glands, kidneys, liver, and brains. Brains cannot be repaired but teeth can.