

Dear Editor:

Talk to your doctor, not movements like West Virginians for Health Freedom or the Informed Consent Action Network, the source of Dr. Alvin Moss's information cited in his August 8<sup>th</sup> letter, regarding the safety and oversight of vaccines and immunizations within the United States.

Between 1994 and 2013, it is estimated 300 million childhood illnesses and 700,000 premature deaths have been avoided by immunization. These illnesses are not just "sniffles" but meningitis, paralysis, cancer, deafness and blindness to mention a few. It is grossly irresponsible to call for a halt in mandatory school immunization because of a failure of a federal agency (DHHS) to file a report mentioned in legislation 30 years ago.

This is especially the case if one took the time to review the copious oversight mechanisms, consent requirements, adverse reaction compensation systems and safety regulations in place to assure US vaccine and immunization practices are as safe as possible. This includes tracking and reporting mechanisms to assure they remain so.

No drug, vaccine or medical treatment is without risk. Although the risk is very low in the case of immunization, mechanisms exist to assure individuals at high risk of serious immunization reactions are exempt from receiving them, while still maintaining the "herd immunity" of the population at large.

This issue is not new and as late as July 30, 2018 the West Virginia State Health Department provided a detailed response to legislators regarding these misleading and dangerous claims and suggestions. I have posted a copy on my website <http://www.localhealthcarereform.com/>.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James David Felsen, M.D." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

James Felsen, MD, MPH