



CONGRESSWOMAN
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Serving the 8th District of Washington

Vaccine Awareness Campaign to Champion Immunization Nationally and Enhance Safety (VACCINES) Act

We are in the midst of the worst measles outbreak in more than two decades. In the early 2000s measles was effectively eliminated in the United States, thanks to the hard work of local and state governments to get children vaccinated. But in 2019, there have already been over 800 confirmed cases.

Immunizations protect not only the health of our own children, but the health of our entire community. Parents who have babies too young to be vaccinated or people who are too sick to be vaccinated count on the rest of us. While the vast majority of people have received the recommended immunizations for preventable diseases, a growing share of young children have not. The current measles epidemic has quickly spread in communities with clusters of unvaccinated people.

Every parent wants to do what they believe is best for their child. Most parents today have never heard of or seen the diseases we protect our children from. They don't understand the very real, truly heartbreaking risks of not vaccinating. And we know there have been calculated efforts to spread misinformation and debunked claims. In order to protect our communities and boost immunizations rates, we need to understand reasons for hesitancy and barriers to vaccination. Armed with the right data, we can target resources and information to educate the public and prevent future outbreaks.

The VACCINES Act gives the CDC the resources it needs to:

- **Understand** what drives vaccine hesitancy and barriers to immunization
- **Track** where there are changes in vaccination confidence, coverage, and refusal rates
- **Predict** where vaccines may be underutilized or where misinformation has been directed in a deliberate manner based on this data
- **Target** educational materials online, in the press, or in person to combat misinformation and increase both public understanding of the benefits of immunization and vaccination rates

Using these four steps, we will be better equipped to predict where infections may occur, pinpoint how best to get needed resources there in a timely manner, and prevent the next outbreak.