



**MEMORANDUM**  
*Academic Programs Office*  
*and*  
*Department of Infectious Diseases*

**TO:** Honorable Jimmy Nalfeh  
Speaker of the House  
and  
Chairman Jere Hargrove  
House Commerce Committee

**FROM:** P. Joan Chesney, MD  
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**DATE:** May 13, 2005

**SUBJECT:** HB0956/SB1616 as amended 5/10/05

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Speaker Nalfeh and Chairman Hargrove;

We would urge support of the position of the TNAAP and State of Tennessee Department of Health (DCH) on this bill. With the exception of the influenza vaccine, all vaccines now recommended for routine administration to children by the ACIP are free of any mercury preservatives including thimerosal and may contain "trace only" amounts as a by product of the manufacturing process. Thus the bill is not necessary to protect children from receiving vaccines containing mercury preservatives and these preservatives will never be added in the future.

As others have pointed out, even if mercury preservatives were still included in vaccines, a number of advisory and regulatory organizations (FDA, IOM, CDC, Immunization Safety

Committee 2004 final report), based on scientific investigations have concluded that thimerosal does not cause serious harm and more specifically does not cause neuro-developmental disorders including autism spectrum disorder.

Most importantly, as TNAAP and the DOH have pointed out, this bill would raise unfounded concerns by parents which could result in renewed efforts opposing vaccines in general.

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The mercury preservative-free vaccines currently recommended for routine use in children (with the exception of influenza) have created unprecedented levels of protection for children against life-threatening infections still present as recently as five years ago.

This bill could create unfounded alarm for the public which is not as well informed as the legislature that current recommended vaccines do not contain mercury preservatives and that scientific evidence does not support mercury preservatives in previous vaccine preparations as the cause of developmental disorders.

Thank you for your consideration.