

Dear Editor:

In response to legal action against it on April 12, 2018, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) acknowledged June 27 that, for the past 30 years, it has failed to issue even one report as required by the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act (NCVIA) of 1986 to promote safer childhood vaccines. The pharmaceutical companies had requested the NCVIA because of litigation costs associated with vaccine injury lawsuits had threatened to put them out of business.

The NCVIA removed liability from vaccine manufacturers for vaccine injuries and deaths. At the same time, it required HHS to establish a watchdog task force to ensure that vaccine safety improved. This task force, by law, was to have reported to Congress every two years and to be actively working to improve vaccine safety. HHS conceded that they have no records whatsoever of this task force reporting to Congress or even being established, leaving a liability-free product on the market with no oversight of safety.

This admission is particularly disturbing because the studies of vaccine safety conducted by vaccine manufacturers are flawed. For example an article in *Slate* found that the Gardasil studies underreported adverse events and restricted the reporting of adverse events to just 14 days after a Gardasil injection, a timeframe insufficient to detect immune and neurological reactions that could take weeks to months to develop. Similarly, Merck reported in its package insert for RECOMBIVAX HB that it monitored vaccine reactions for only five days and GlaxoSmithKline monitored vaccine reactions to ENGERIX-B for only four days.

How can we be mandating vaccines to the children of West Virginia when HHS has not issued reports to improve vaccine safety? Should there not be an end to mandatory vaccination until such time as HHS provides the vaccine safety reports to Congress required by law? Because the federal government has neglected to exercise to protect Americans from vaccine harms for more than 30 years, it is the state's immediate responsibility to protect West Virginia children from potential vaccine injury. West Virginians for Health Freedom are calling on the Governor to call a special session to ask the West Virginia Legislature to eliminate mandatory vaccination in West Virginia.

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