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The family is the foundation of any free nation. Parents love, provide for and protect their children. They teach them their values, beliefs and protect them from outside influences, harms, institutions and people who do not have their best interests in mind. Parents protect their children from adults who prey upon the innocence and vulnerabilities of children too. No other institution but the family consistently provides that protection. None. No school, agency, or group of unrelated adults provide the same love and protection for children like a family does, despite the many times parents fail or fall short. Because inside the family mistakes are opportunities to learn about humility, grace and forgiveness too. Because the relationship is consistent and foundational and one, children, know will be there tomorrow. It is the right and responsibility of parents to provide this structure.

The reason it is necessary to re-establish parental rights in Minnesota statute is because of the current statute 13.02, subdivision 8, “an individual acting as a parent or guardian in the absence of a parent or guardian, except that the responsible authority shall withhold data from parents or guardians, or individuals acting as parents or guardians in the absence of parents or guardians, upon request by the minor if the **responsible authority determines** that withholding the data would be in the best interest of the minor.” To paraphrase, this means someone else who has little familiarity with the child, their circumstances or their parents, can decide the minor child can withhold personal data from their parents if the minor child asks the ‘stranger’ to do so. To presume this ‘authority’ can decide what is in the best interest of the child without consulting with their parents is an outrageous and dangerous practice. It usurps parental rights.

Everybody knows there are peaks and valleys in a child's life, and they are not mature enough to make life altering decisions without receiving love, consult and guidance from their parents.

Schools are institutions. They are trying to manage hundreds if not thousands of kids. They make lousy parents. They certainly do not qualify to be the trusted and final 'authority' to step in and decide a child can sever their relationship with their parents by deciding they can withhold personal health information from them.

Some of the decisions a child can make from that point on could be permanent and irreversible. 10 years later where is that institution? Where is that responsible "authority" as the child struggles with regret or anxiety about a decision they made in the heat of the moment? They are not there. They are not walking alongside this person. The parents are. They have always been the ones who have loved and cared for that child no matter what.

I volunteered for several years as a first responder in a nurse's office at camp. If a child came into the office and needed anything more than a minor wound cleaned and bandaged, I would be on the phone as soon as possible to alert their parents so they knew what was going on with THEIR child. Not only was this my role, it's what I would want if the roles were reversed where I was home and they were making a medical decision concerning my child.

Parents give consent for their minor children to take cough drops, Tylenol and other medications while at school and camp, why would we cut the parents out of major health related decisions? It defies logic.

The Child Protection League's mission is to protect children from exploitation, indoctrination, and violence. SF2909 reasserts in statute that greatest principle for protecting children, a principle our nation has understood and practiced for generations, that "it is a fundamental right of a parent to direct the upbringing, health, well-being, mental health and education of the parent's minor child."