

came into being. That is why we developed our own parent information packet on pertussis vaccine. That is why increasing numbers of lawsuits are being filed on behalf of vaccine-damaged children. That is why a bill like S. 2117 is needed.

FINDING #7: There is a "Middle Ground" for better protecting our children's health. We need not be blind to the dangers of the vaccine in order to be concerned about the dangers of the disease. We need not ignore concerns about whooping cough in order to avoid vaccine-related brain damage. Being concerned about both the disease and the vaccine, we can work in an informed and balanced way to safeguard our children's health.

II. DPT's Ten Principles

In our July 1983 testimony before this Committee, Dissatisfied Parents Together set forth ten principles for achieving this "Middle Ground". We called these principles for distinguishing genuine "vaccine victim compensation" legislation from proposals which, in practical effect, would be "vaccine victim condemnation" bills. These ten principles are re-stated below:

1. The bill should expressly acknowledge that pertussis vaccines can, and in some instances do, cause serious reactions, including seizures, brain damage, even death.
2. The bill must not simply be an effort to sweep the DPT-vaccine problem under the rug. Compensating those who are injured by the vaccine and continuing to require virtually all children to take this admittedly "dirty" vaccine is not an acceptable solution. The bill should contain positive commitments and incentives to reduce the risks of reactions to the current vaccine and to promote development of safer vaccines. As a minimum these commitments and incentives should include: requirements for adequate written information to parents on the risks of the vaccine and on the contraindications to the vaccine; adequate recordkeeping and reporting by doctors and clinics giving the vaccine; more stringent quality control and testing requirements by manufacturers; and more leniency in defining categories of high risk children who should not be required to receive the vaccine.
3. The bill must not restrict in any way a parent's (or child's) right to sue under existing law. The choice as to whether to sue under existing law or to seek this new form of compensation should belong entirely to the parents.
4. The bill must provide an opportunity for effective compensation for all seriously vaccine-injured individuals, regardless of how long ago the injury may have occurred.