

Pacific Justice Institute

Center for Public Policy

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VIA FAX AND U.S. MAIL

March 25, 2015

Sen. Ed Hernandez, Chair
Senate Health Committee
State Capitol, Room 2080
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 651-4922 (office)
(916) 266-9438 (committee)

RE: SB 277--oppose

Dear Senator Hernandez:

We are writing to formally express our opposition to Senate Bill 277. As an organization committed to both parental and constitutional rights, we are concerned that this bill goes too far in mandating immunizations without taking account of religious and conscientious minorities.

Without question, vaccines can be credited for saving millions of lives over the past century. We are not anti-vaccine, and it is important for the Committee to understand that opposition to this bill comes from many different perspectives.

Our opposition is borne of the conviction that rights of conscience, bodily integrity and self-determination are of the utmost importance and must not be eliminated on a broad basis for the asserted need to address a temporary and limited health scare.

While most Californians do not object to most vaccines, it is wrong for us to compel people with conscientious objections to be forcibly injected with products they find to be morally reprehensible, particularly where herd immunity has already been achieved. As a few examples demonstrate, we believe it would be wrong to forcibly inject Muslims or Orthodox Jews with vaccines derived from animals they believe to be unclean. Likewise, it is wrong to forcibly inject vegans with vaccines derived from animals. And it would be wrong to forcibly inject pro-life advocates with vaccines derived from fetal cell lines.

Under current jurisprudence, the State has a strong interest in ensuring high vaccine rates. Those goals have been achieved in California with a statewide vaccination rate for children that exceeds the statewide threshold for herd immunity. To the extent that a few communities have fallen below vaccination levels needed for herd immunity, the Legislature could consider approaches that allow greater local decision-making and accountability, rather than imposing across-the-board, unnecessary statewide mandates. Since the recent measles and whooping cough outbreaks have also affected significant numbers of people who have, in fact, been vaccinated, attention should more properly be directed at vaccine manufacturers whose products are

proving to be less effective than advertised. Merely doubling down on the mandated use of defective products defies common sense.

In sum, there is little to be gained and much to be lost from SB 277. We urge you to resist the political temptation to “do something” at the expense of religious and conscientious minorities. The negative effects of this heavy-handed overreaction will linger long after the short-lived and over-hyped outbreaks that supposedly necessitate it.

Sincerely,



Matthew B. McReynolds
Senior Staff Attorney
Pacific Justice Institute Center for Public Policy