

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESB 5005

C 299 L 11
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning exemption from immunization.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser, Honeyford, Pflug, Becker, Regala, Carrell, Hobbs, Nelson, Rockefeller, Shin and Chase.

Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care
House Committee on Health Care & Wellness

Background: Before the first day of school, students at Washington's public and private schools (preschool through 12th grade) and children attending licensed day care must provide proof of immunization against certain vaccine-preventable diseases as determined by the Washington State Board of Health (BOH). However, a parent or guardian may exempt a child for one of several reasons including if a physician advises against a specific vaccine for a child, parents certify that the vaccine conflicts with their religious beliefs, or parents certify that they have philosophical or personal objections to the child's immunization.

Under BOH rules, the required immunization schedule includes vaccinations against 11 diseases. Nearly all states allow medical and religious exemptions from their school immunization requirements. According to a 2005 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, 20 states allow exemptions based on philosophical or personal objections.

Summary: Modifications are made to the certification, that a parent or guardian must present, to exempt a child from school immunization requirements. The form used to certify the exemption for either medical, religious, or personal objections must include a statement, signed by a health care practitioner, that the parent or guardian has been informed of the benefits and risks of the immunization to the child. Health care practitioners may sign forms at any time before the enrollment of the child in a school or licensed day care. Photocopies of the signed form or a letter from the health care practitioner are allowed in lieu of the original form.

A health care practitioner is defined as a licensed physician, licensed naturopath, licensed physician assistant, or advanced registered nurse practitioner.

A parent or legal guardian who exempts his or her child from immunization requirements because of religious beliefs is not required to have the form signed by a health care

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practitioner if they belong to a church with teachings that preclude a health professional from providing medical treatment to the child.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	35	11	
House	66	29	(House amended)
Senate	34	12	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 22, 2011.