

## **HF206: An Act relating to the elimination of the exemption from immunization of a person related to conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious denomination.**

Currently, there is an option for religious exemption from required immunizations for a person's enrollment in any elementary or secondary school or licensed child care center relating to conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious denomination of which the applicant is an adherent or member. In order to obtain religious exemption, the parent or guardian does not need to validate their religious denomination or receive any standardized education regarding.

- Vaccines are the greatest public health achievement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. <sup>1</sup>
- Between 2006 and 2018, the number of religious exemptions filed at Iowa schools for incoming kindergarten students has risen over 239%. (2006=2572 vs. 2017=8740) <sup>2</sup>
- Between 2006 and 2018, the percentage of incoming kindergarten students who were fully immunized decreased from 97.39% to 95.55%. While these numbers represent good herd immunity, the percentages are falling. <sup>2</sup>
- Herd immunity is most effective when 90-95% of the population is immunized. Herd immunity is the point which enough people are immune to certain diseases to prevent people who are not immune from catching the disease. <sup>3</sup>
- Washington state's immunization rate in 2017-2018 was 85.7%. Below the recommended herd immunity percentage. <sup>4</sup>
- Washington state currently has 54 cases of measles, 53 of these cases in one county alone. There are measles cases in other states, including Illinois. <sup>5,6</sup>
- In 2010, California kindergarten students had a 90.7% immunization rate. In 2015, California law (SB277) no longer accept religious exemptions for school entry. Since the passage of SB277, the percent of students entering kindergarten has risen by 4.4% meaning now 95.1% of California kindergarten students are immunized. <sup>7,8</sup>
- "...But if these vaccines serve to protect many more lives they are permitted. Regarding this, we should not consider vaccination opposed to the theological base and values. Following this idea, religion is not in contradiction with vaccination and public health. It is only individual parents or religious leaders and their questionable interpretation of religious practices that are opposed to vaccination, no religion as such." <sup>9</sup>

### References:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056796.htm>
2. <https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/206/School-Childcare%20Audit%20Report%208-20-18%20Final.pdf>
3. <https://www.ovg.ox.ac.uk/news/herd-immunity-how-does-it-work>
4. <https://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/HealthBehaviors/Immunization/SchoolReports/DataTables>
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>
6. <https://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/HealthBehaviors/Immunization/SchoolReports/DataTables>
7. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Immunization/2017-2018KindergartenSummaryReport.pdf>
8. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/docs/HealthNews/ImmunizationAssessment-12-12.pdf>
9. Pelčić, G., Karačić, S., Mikirtichan, G. L., Kubar, O. I., Leavitt, F. J., Cheng-Tek Tai, M., Morishita, N., Vuletić, S., ... Tomašević, L. (2016). Religious exception for vaccination or religious excuses for avoiding vaccination. *Croatian medical journal*, 57(5), 516-521.