

SENATE BILL NO. 474

INTRODUCED BY D. EMRICH, V. RICCI

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REQUIRING ACCEPTANCE OF RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS AND  
~~PERSONAL MEDICAL INFORMED CONSENT~~ EXEMPTIONS TO REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS;  
PROVIDING RELIEF FOR VIOLATIONS OF ~~RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS~~; ~~PROVIDING A DEFINITION~~;  
PROVIDING THAT THE ACCEPTANCE OF AN EXEMPTION TO REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS DOES NOT  
CREATE A CIVIL LIABILITY FOR CERTAIN AUTHORITIES; AMENDING ~~SECTION SECTIONS~~ 20-5-405,  
AND 49-2-312, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

~~NEW SECTION. Section 1. Acceptance of religious exemptions to immunizations required—  
immunity — definition. (1) For the purposes of this chapter, discrimination on the basis of religion includes  
denials of requests for an exemption from an otherwise required immunization as defined in 20-5-402 based on  
the individual's religion.~~

~~(2) A person that accepts an individual's religious exemption from an immunization is not liable for  
civil damages from an injury arising out of the individual's nonimmunized status.~~

~~NEW SECTION. Section 2. Acceptance of religious exemption from immunization. For the  
purposes of this chapter, discrimination on the basis of religion includes denials of requests for an exemption  
from an otherwise required immunization based on the individual's religion.~~

**Section 1.** Section 20-5-405, MCA, is amended to read:

**"20-5-405. Exemptions -- limitations on agency actions.** (1) (a) There is a religious exemption to  
the immunizations required under 20-5-403. A person enrolled or seeking to enroll in school may attend the  
school without obtaining the immunizations required under 20-5-403 if the person files with the governing  
authority ~~an a~~ A SIGNED STATEMENT, LETTER, OR ~~notarized~~ affidavit on a form prescribed by the department

1 stating that immunization is contrary to the ~~religious tenets and practices of the signer~~ person's religion

2 RELIGIOUS TENETS AND PRACTICES OF THE SIGNER.

3 (b) The statement must be signed:

4 (i) by the person enrolled or seeking to enroll in the school, if the person is an adult; or

5 (ii) if the person is a minor, by a parent, guardian, or adult who has the responsibility for the care  
6 and custody of the minor.

7 (c) The statement must be maintained as part of the person's immunization records.

8 (2) (a) There is a medical exemption to the immunizations required under 20-5-403. A person  
9 enrolled or seeking to enroll in school may attend the school without obtaining the immunizations if a written  
10 medical exemption statement signed by a health care provider specified in subsection (2)(c) is filed with the  
11 governing authority. The medical exemption statement must:

12 (i) attest that the physical condition of the person enrolled or seeking to enroll in school or the  
13 medical circumstances relating to the person indicate that some or all of the required immunizations are not  
14 considered safe; and

15 (ii) indicate the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstances  
16 that contraindicate immunization.

17 (b) The person is exempt from the requirements of this part to the extent indicated by the medical  
18 exemption statement.

19 (c) The medical exemption statement must be signed by a person who:

20 (i) is licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by the laws of any state or Canada to provide  
21 health care as defined in 50-16-504;

22 (ii) is authorized within the person's scope of practice to administer the immunizations to which the  
23 exemption applies; and

24 (iii) has previously provided health care to the person seeking the exemption or has administered  
25 an immunization to which the person seeking an exemption has had an adverse reaction.

26 ~~(3) There is a personal medical exemption to the immunizations required under 20-5-403. A~~

27 ~~person enrolled or seeking to enroll in school may attend the school without obtaining the immunizations if a~~

28 ~~written personal medical exemption statement signed by the person is filed with the governing authority. The~~

personal medical exemption statement must:

(a) be a notarized affidavit on a form prescribed by the department;

(b) specify the immunizations required under 20-5-403 for which the person is filing an exemption;

(c) include a declaration that the person has consulted with a health care provider and has obtained from the health care provider information on the potential risks and benefits of each immunization for which the person is filing an exemption; and

(d) be signed by:

(i) the person enrolled or seeking to enroll in the school, if the person is an adult; or

(ii) if the person is a minor, by a parent, guardian, or adult who has the responsibility for the care and custody of the minor.

(3) (A) THERE IS AN EXEMPTION TO THE IMMUNIZATIONS REQUIRED UNDER 20-5-403 THAT IS BASED ON INFORMED CONSENT. A PERSON ENROLLED OR SEEKING TO ENROLL IN SCHOOL MAY ATTEND THE SCHOOL WITHOUT OBTAINING THE IMMUNIZATIONS IF THE PERSON FILES WITH THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY A SIGNED STATEMENT, LETTER, OR NOTARIZED AFFIDAVIT ON A FORM PRESCRIBED BY THE DEPARTMENT STATING THAT THE SIGNER RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT THE REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS AND DECLINED TO BE IMMUNIZED.

(B) THE STATEMENT, LETTER, OR NOTARIZED AFFIDAVIT MUST BE SIGNED:

(I) IF THE PERSON IS AN ADULT, BY THE PERSON ENROLLED OR SEEKING TO ENROLL IN THE SCHOOL; OR

(II) IF THE PERSON IS A MINOR, BY A PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR ADULT WHO HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CARE AND CUSTODY OF THE MINOR.

(C) THE STATEMENT, LETTER, OR NOTARIZED AFFIDAVIT MUST BE MAINTAINED AS PART OF THE PERSON'S IMMUNIZATION RECORDS.

~~(3)~~(4) (a) The department may not require an exemption form under this section that imposes requirements that are more burdensome or otherwise in excess of the requirements described in this section. A form prescribed by the department that contains requirements not expressly described in this section is void to the extent that it purports to impose requirements not included in this section.

(b) A governing authority may not deny an exemption on the basis that a person has not completed portions of the exemption form that are void under this subsection ~~(3)~~ (4).

(c) The department is not authorized to review a completed medical exemption statement or

1 medical exemption form for the purpose of granting or denying a medical exemption.

2 (d) An exemption statement or form under this section must be maintained as part of the person's  
3 immunization records and may not be photocopied or otherwise duplicated for use by a third party without the  
4 permission of the student's parent or, if the student is an adult, the written consent of the student.

5 ~~(4)(5)~~ Whenever there is good cause to believe that a person for whom an exemption has been filed  
6 under this section has a disease or has been exposed to a disease listed in 20-5-403 or will as the result of  
7 school attendance be exposed to the disease, the person may be excluded from the school by the local health  
8 officer or the department until the excluding authority is satisfied that the person no longer risks contracting or  
9 transmitting that disease.

10 ~~(6) (A) A PERSON OR GOVERNING AUTHORITY THAT ACCEPTS AN INDIVIDUAL'S EXEMPTION FROM AN~~  
11 ~~IMMUNIZATION IS NOT LIABLE FOR CIVIL DAMAGES FROM AN INJURY ARISING OUT OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S IMMUNIZATION~~  
12 ~~STATUS.~~

13 ~~(B) SUBSECTION (6)(A) DOES NOT APPLY TO A GOVERNMENT ENTITY."~~

15 **Section 2.** SECTION 49-2-312, MCA, IS AMENDED TO READ:

16 **"49-2-312. Discrimination based on vaccination status or possession of immunity passport**  
17 **prohibited -- definitions.** (1) ~~Except as provided in subsection (2), it~~ It is an unlawful discriminatory practice  
18 for:

19 (a) a person or a ~~governmental~~ GOVERNMENT entity to refuse, withhold from, or deny to a person  
20 any local or state services, goods, facilities, advantages, privileges, licensing, educational opportunities, health  
21 care access, or employment opportunities based on the person's vaccination status or whether the person has  
22 an immunity passport;

23 (b) an employer to refuse employment to a person, to bar a person from employment, or to  
24 discriminate against a person in compensation or in a term, condition, or privilege of employment based on the  
25 person's vaccination status or whether the person has an immunity passport; or

26 (c) a public accommodation to exclude, limit, segregate, refuse to serve, or otherwise discriminate  
27 against a person based on the person's vaccination status or whether the person has an immunity passport.

28 ~~(2) This section does not apply to vaccination requirements set forth for schools pursuant to Title~~