

Religious and Personal Belief Exemptions

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In this era of vaccine hesitancy, families are pointing to religious and personal beliefs to allow their unvaccinated children to attend school.

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In this era of vaccine hesitancy, families are pointing to religious and personal beliefs to allow their unvaccinated children to attend school. Over the past several years, a number of states have begun to legislate against these exemptions. Now only 15 states allow personal belief exemptions to vaccination, but 45 states permit religious exemptions. As the ability to claim philosophical exemptions to vaccination decreasing, what has happened to the rate of religious exemptions? Williams et al ([10.1542/peds.2019-2710](#)) investigated this question by examining CDC data on exemptions for kindergartners from 2011-2018 based on the allowance of vaccine exemptions. The authors found states that allowed both religious and philosophical exemptions only had about 25% of the number of religious exemptions as those states that offered only religious exemptions.

Given the need to assure community herd immunity persists, having more families claim exemptions can jeopardize the safety of those who are immunocompromised and could enable outbreaks of preventable illnesses like measles to occur in this country. It is for this reason that vaccine champions like Dr. Richard Pan, who is both a pediatrician and legislator in California, has worked to remove both exemptions in that state, leaving only medical exemptions in place. Dr. Pan is now also advocating for the state to oversee approval of medical exemptions to ensure their legitimacy. This article will certainly demonstrate that one type of exemption is not sufficient to curb those who are hesitant to vaccinate their children and that stricter state control of exemptions is necessary if we are going to ensure that children and adults do not succumb to life-threatening illnesses preventable by vaccines. Booster your knowledge base on this topic by linking to this study and learning more.

- [Elimination of Nonmedical Immunization Exemptions in California and School-Entry Vaccine Status](#)
- [Personal Belief Exemptions to Vaccination in California: A Spatial Analysis](#)
- [Experiences With Medical Exemptions After a Change in Vaccine Exemption Policy in California](#)
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