



February 16, 2022

Senator Andreas Borgeas
Assemblyman Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Assemblyman Jim Patterson

Re: No on Senate Bill 871

Dear Members of the California Legislature:

We write in opposition to Senate Bill 871 (Pan) and oppose any COVID-19 vaccine mandate for K-12 schools. We urge you to oppose any efforts to limit or eliminate the medical reasons and personal belief exemptions in Health and Safety Code section 120338.

As you are aware, the Governor has announced that the state will require that children receive a COVID-19 vaccine as a condition of in-classroom schooling once fully authorized by the federal government. Under current law, families will be able to exempt their child from this requirement based on personal beliefs or medical reasons, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 120338. It is crucial that the Legislature retain these exemptions for families. In a recent survey conducted by Clovis Unified School District (a district of approximately 43,000 students), 61% of responding parents/guardians supported a personal belief exemption. These families share the same beliefs as many of your constituents. Eliminating these exemption options for families would be a profound intrusion into the parent-child relationship.

Public opinion aside, our students have a right to public education under the California Constitution. We anticipate the implementation of a vaccination mandate, without a personal belief and medical exemption, will deeply impact schools, as families will leave for alternatives to classroom-based instruction, which will present Clovis Unified with educational and operational challenges. The constitutional right should not be conditioned on the medical decision to receive a vaccine created last year, for a disease that is not life-threatening for the overwhelming majority of children.

It is important to recall that vaccine mandates without exemptions for objecting families are a relatively new development in California. While the state has required vaccines for school children for decades, it was only in 2015 that most exemptions were eliminated by Senate Bill 277. And even then, Senate Bill 277 reflected legislators' conviction that personal belief exemptions should remain in place for newly-required vaccines. The underlying rationale for this exemption remains sound. By definition, we know less about potential long-term effects of newer vaccines.

Governing Board

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Steven G. Fogg, M.D.

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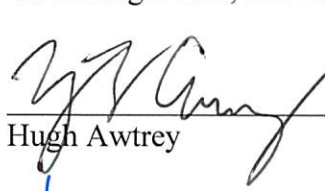
Tiffany Stoker Madsen

We acknowledge and celebrate the studies that show COVID-19 vaccines are effective in reducing hospitalizations and death. However, it should continue to be up to parents, not the government, to make decisions regarding newly approved vaccines for their children.

Please support our students' right to a public education and our parents' right to decisional autonomy by retaining the exemptions enshrined in Health and Safety Code section 120338.

Sincerely,

Governing Board, Clovis Unified School District



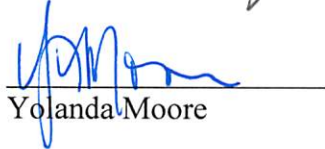
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Copied to all members of the Legislature

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