

BREAKING NEWS:

SB 277 VACCINE BILL HITS ROAD BLOCK – SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HOLDS BILL IN COMMITTEE FOR LIKELY CHANGES REGARDING EXEMPTIONS & OTHER CONCERNS RAISED BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS FROM BOTH PARTIES – WILL HEAR BILL AGAIN NEXT WEEK “FOR VOTE ONLY” MEANING NO FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENT AT THE HEARING

SACRAMENTO, CA [CDCAN LAST UPDATED 04/15/2015 – 12:44 PM] – After an intense 3 hour hearing, SB 277, the controversial legislation to require vaccinations in California public schools for all students except for specific medical exemptions and eliminating current State law allowing for personal belief exemptions, hit a major road block today in Senate Education Committee, after members from both parties expressed concerns about eliminating exemptions and rights of parents, holding the bill in committee for another hearing next week.

The bill faces likely amendments needed to address concerns of committee members next week in order to get the votes needed for passage and referral to the third and final policy committee - Senate Judiciary Committee before the May 1st deadline.

SB 277, authored by Senator Richard Pan (Democrat – Sacramento, 6th State Senate District) and also Senator Ben Allen (Democrat – Santa Monica, 26th State Senate District) will be heard again in the Senate Education Committee next week for a “vote only” hearing on the legislation – meaning no further testimony. The public however can continue to send in comments and letters to committee members on the bill.

Senator Carol Liu (Democrat – Pasadena), Senate Education Committee chair, told the authors, after nearly three hours of public comment and discussion on the bill, that she was recommending the bill be taken up next Wednesday for an additional hearing, to allow for needed changes and to address questions and concerns raised by committee members. Liu urged the delay, saying that at the moment, the bill did not have the votes to pass out of committee.

The legislation would remove the ability for parents to file a personal belief exemption from the requirement that children receive vaccines for specific communicable diseases prior to being admitted to any private or public elementary or secondary school, child care center, day nursery, nursery school, family day care home, or child development centers.

The issue has been of major concern to many families with children with autism spectrum and related disorders who argue that removal of the exemptions to required vaccinations is a violation of their rights as parents or rights related to religious freedoms. Many of those families expressed fear and concerns that vaccinations are linked to causing autism spectrum disorders – though advocates for removing exemptions to mandatory vaccinations in public schools have argued that current scientific and medical findings on that issue has disapproved that linkage.

SB 277 passed out of Senate Health Committee on April 7th, by a vote of 6 to 2 and was referred to Senate Education Committee for its hearing today.

NEXT STEPS

NEXT POLICY COMMITTEE:

The bill, if it passes out of Senate Education Committee next week, it still must face a hearing and passage from a third policy committee – the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The bill must pass out of all policy committees on or before May 1st in order to remain active for the remainder of the 2015 Legislative Session.

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE DEADLINE:

If the bill passes out of Senate Judiciary Committee, it must go for a hearing in Senate Appropriations Committee to review the fiscal impact of the legislation.

The bill – like many others – would likely be held on the committee’s “suspense file” – a holding place for bills for the committee to later consider and determine which of those bills will pass out of committee and which bills will be held, essentially killing the legislation, at least for the remainder of the 2015 session.

The deadline for the Senate Appropriations Committee to hear and report out the bill (and other bills having fiscal impact) is May 29th.

SENATE FLOOR DEADLINE:

If the bill passes out of Senate Appropriations Committee, it must be taken up and passed by the State Senate and sent to the Assembly on or before June 5, 2015.