

# PROTECT OUR KIDS

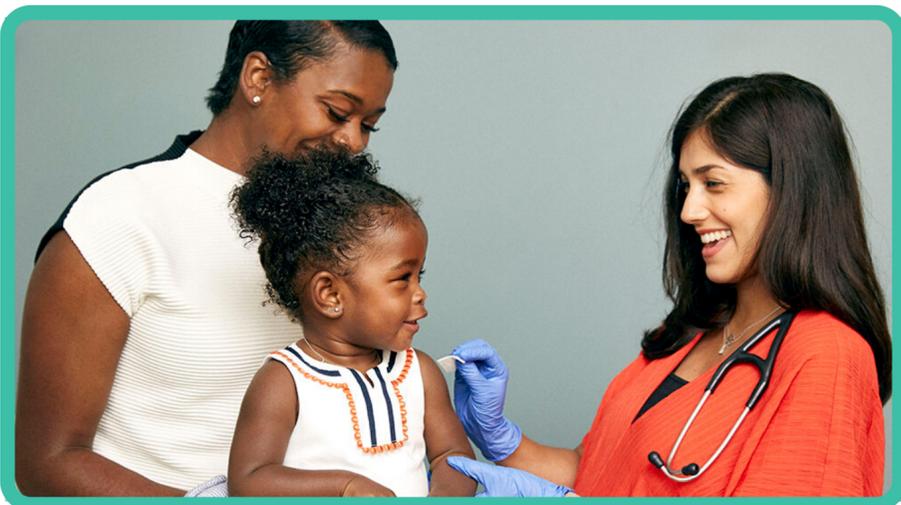
H.3999 AN ACT RELATIVE TO VACCINES AND PUBLIC HEALTH  
bi-partisan | science-driven | endorsed by public health professionals

## BACKGROUND

There is an outbreak of measles cases in the United States, reaching a 25 year high. It directly correlates with continued growth of the number of "religious" exemptions to childhood vaccines. The religious exemption requires a "sincere religious belief." However, religious exemptions are at a 5x high in Massachusetts since the 1980's, despite there being no change in the state's religious demographics and no major religion professing anti-vaccine beliefs.

People are taking advantage of MA's lax regulation of the exemption and pushing medical misinformation onto their children, which **puts all children and individuals with compromised immune systems at risk.**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has named vaccine hesitancy as a top 10 public health threat for 2019.



## Legal & The Right Thing to Do

**The bill is 100% constitutional.** For over a century the courts have continuously ruled that removing religious exemptions for vaccines does not violate the First Amendment.

**The Supreme Court of the United States agrees,** and has ruled that "the right to practice religion freely does not include liberty to expose the community or the child to communicable disease or the latter to ill health or death."

**States have already acted to protect their kids.** Mississippi, West Virginia, California, Maine, and most recently New York have removed religious exemptions.

## THE BILL

What does H.3999 do?

- *An act relative to vaccination and public health, simply removes the religious vaccination exemption for children entering schools in Massachusetts. It maintains medical exemptions.*
- The bill does not make vaccines mandatory. If a parent voluntarily chooses not to vaccinate their children, they can do so, but must find non-traditional schooling for them.
- *"Section 15 of chapter 76 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the third paragraph."*

**Protect  
Our  
Kids**   
Massachusetts Coalition

**"The current measles outbreak has been very stressful for our family. Our daughter has a chronic kidney disease and a weakened immune system. More than ever, we rely on our fellow citizens to vaccinate their children to protect our daughter."**

**- Boston, MA Family**

# Why Massachusetts needs to stand with science & public health professionals:

## Vaccines protect our kids and the immunocompromised

- Vaccines are one of the safest, most studied, and effective tools we have to combat serious, deadly illnesses
- Our children, who are too young to receive vaccines or are immunocompromised, rely on others to vaccinate for protection

## No Religion has a doctrine banning vaccines

- No religion dogmatically requires a person to refuse vaccination.
- A doctor approved medical exemption would continue to exist under H.3999. Any medical concerns can and should be addressed with the experts, children's pediatricians

## Over 1,000 Measles Cases Nationwide in 2019

- A measles outbreak in New York infected over 650 people and cost the state \$6 million, all thanks to vaccine hesitancy
- In Massachusetts there have been 3 cases, including one in Boston. We don't want what happened in NY, happening to MA children

## Religious exemptions for vaccine have reached an all time high

- 500% increase in use of **religious** exemptions despite a decline in MA's religious demographics
- Conspiracy theories and medical misinformation have spread like wildfire through use of social media



## organizations in support of removing the religious exemption



MASSACHUSETTS  
MEDICAL SOCIETY

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



The Massachusetts Chapter

**jalsa**  
JEWISH ALLIANCE FOR  
LAW & SOCIAL ACTION

**Mi**  
MARCH OF DIMES

MASSACHUSETTS  
**PTA**  
everychild.one voice

  
MASSACHUSETTS  
PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
Action for Equity in Health

  
**MassKids**  
Celebrating 6 decades of effective child advocacy

  
CENTER  
FOR  
INQUIRY

The  
Boston  
Globe

  
Immune  
Deficiency  
Foundation

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