

California's New Vaccine Laws Should Be a Model for All States



By Alex Berezow, PhD — September 16, 2019



Credit: Salim Fadhley/Wikipedia [1]

Usually, when we have something to say about California, it's bad. After all, this is the state that gave us Proposition 65, a smorgasbord of insane public health policies, and 38 seasons of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*.

But now, the state has done something good. Very good.

The saga began in late 2014 when a measles outbreak occurred at Disneyland, the happiest place on Earth. In the wake of that public health (and public relations) nightmare, California decided to crack down on anti-vaxxers in the state. So, it passed a law banning personal belief exemptions for vaccines. At the time, it was hailed as one of the toughest in the nation.

Anti-vaxxers weren't going to surrender so easily, however. Soon afterward, there was a noticeable increase in the number of medical exemptions issued by doctors. The *Los Angeles Times* [reported](#) [2] that medical exemptions tripled from 2015 to 2016, indicating that anti-vaxxers found sympathetic doctors to hand out exemptions. So, California cracked the whip again.

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The state passed new laws aimed at reducing the number of dubious medical exemptions. The two [most important provisions](#) [3] allow officials to investigate doctors who give out five or more vaccine exemptions each year and schools in which the immunization rate falls below 95%. These are fantastic changes, and other states (or perhaps the federal government) should implement them.

As usual, anti-vaxxers weren't going to go quietly into the night. Before the new laws were passed,

California state Senator Richard Pan, who is also a pediatrician, was assaulted. According to [KQED](#) [4], his assailant posted a video of the attack on Facebook and said, "Yes, I pushed Richard Pan for lying, laughing at us and for treason."

KQED goes on to report that:

"...the video depicts Bennett strolling in downtown Sacramento, discoursing on a series of topics he says he's concerned about: CIA "crimes," including what he called mind control efforts; angel statues on the Capitol Mall he described as preparing the way for the arrival of Lucifer and rule by the Antichrist; how President Trump has committed blasphemy "against the blood of Jesus Christ"; and the use of chemtrails for "mass spraying ... to stop the solar radiation" he describes as necessary to human health."

These people constitute the intelligentsia behind the anti-vaccine campaign. No wonder a woman thought it appropriate to [throw a menstrual cup \(supposedly\) full of blood](#) [5] at California legislators.

Likely venting her frustration, Jennifer Kent, director of California's Department of Health Care Services, [posted a tweet](#) [6] in which she compared anti-vaxxers to flat-earthers and used some vulgar language. She resigned shortly thereafter, probably marking the first time in California history that a bureaucrat resigned for speaking the truth.

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Links

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nursing#/media/File:British_woman_tending_to_a_baby.jpg

[2] <https://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-vaccine-medical-exemptions-20170905-story.html>

[3] <https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/10/politics/california-vaccine-bill-gavin-newsom/index.html>

[4] <https://www.kqed.org/news/11768991/anti-vaccine-activist-assaults-state-sen-richard-pan-posts-video-to-facebook>

[5] <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article235084637.html>

[6] <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-09-10/california-health-director-resigns>