



Jim Justice
Governor of West Virginia

March 27, 2024

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Mac Warner
Secretary of State
State Capitol Complex
Building 1, Suite 157-K
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Re: Enrolled Committee Substitute for House Bill 5105

Secretary Warner:

Pursuant to Section Fourteen, Article VII of the Constitution of the State of West Virginia, I hereby disapprove and return Enrolled Committee Substitute for House Bill 5105, which seeks to expand exemptions for vaccination requirements for West Virginia school students.

Since this legislation was passed, I have heard constant, strong opposition to this legislation from our State's medical community. The overwhelming majority that have voiced their opinion believe that this legislation will do irreparable harm by crippling childhood immunity to diseases such as mumps and measles. West Virginia historically has seen very few instances of these diseases, specifically because the vaccination requirements in this State are so strong. Importantly, the vaccines at issue have been required in this State for decades and have kept our communities safe. Our surrounding states, however, have seen spikes in such illnesses recently. These spikes, we are advised, are the result of the lesser vaccine requirements in those states. The image below shows surrounding states with reported measles cases as of March 21, 2024, highlighted in blue.



Additionally, we have heard from many private and parochial institutions all around the State, likewise requesting this bill be vetoed. We have heard from this community that they see this bill as purely divisive and, if signed into law, requiring consideration of adopting policies that will result in parents pulling their children from their schools.

I have always and will always defend our freedoms as West Virginians and as Americans. I hear how strongly people believe in one side or the other on this subject, and I respect all opinions. But I must follow the guidance of our medical experts on this subject. Our medical community in West Virginia serves our people every single day, helping protect our people from disease and poor health. Their wisdom should not be ignored—especially when it comes to the health and safety of our children.

West Virginia is way ahead of the pack in protecting our children from preventable diseases like the measles, and in this matter, I will defer to our licensed medical professionals who have come forward overwhelmingly to say this bill could and likely would result in reduced immunity and harm to West Virginia's kids. Our kids are our future. They are our most important resource, and I will protect them with everything I have. Accordingly, I hereby disapprove and return Enrolled Committee Substitute for House Bill 5105.

Sincerely,



Jim Justice
Governor

cc: The Honorable Craig Blair
President of the Senate

The Honorable Roger Hanshaw
Speaker of the House of Delegates