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**SENATE BILL 5682**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Senators McCune, Fortunato, Padden, Short, J. Wilson, and L. Wilson

AN ACT Relating to protecting the freedom to choose whether to receive a COVID-19 vaccination; amending RCW 28A.210.090 and 28A.210.090; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; providing an effective date; providing an expiration date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW to read as follows:

Notwithstanding any laws or mandates issued by any government or private entity to the contrary, all citizens of the state have the freedom to choose whether to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.210.090 and 2019 c 362 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Any child shall be exempt in whole or in part from the immunization measures required by RCW 28A.210.060 through 28A.210.170 upon the presentation of any one or more of the certifications required by this section, on a form prescribed by the department of health:

(a) A written certification signed by a health care practitioner that a particular vaccine required by rule of the state board of health is, in his or her judgment, not advisable for the child: PROVIDED, That when it is determined that this particular vaccine is no longer contraindicated, the child will be required to have the vaccine;

(b) A written certification signed by any parent or legal guardian of the child or any adult in loco parentis to the child that the religious beliefs of the signator are contrary to the required immunization measures; or

(c) A written certification signed by any parent or legal guardian of the child or any adult in loco parentis to the child that the signator has either a philosophical or personal objection to the immunization of the child. A philosophical or personal objection may not be used to exempt a child from the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine.

(2)(a) The form presented on or after July 22, 2011, must include a statement to be signed by a health care practitioner stating that he or she provided the signator with information about the benefits and risks of immunization to the child. The form may be signed by a health care practitioner at any time prior to the enrollment of the child in a school or licensed day care. Photocopies of the signed form or a letter from the health care practitioner referencing the child's name shall be accepted in lieu of the original form.

(b) A health care practitioner who, in good faith, signs the statement provided for in (a) of this subsection is immune from civil liability for providing the signature.

(c) Any parent or legal guardian of the child or any adult in loco parentis to the child who exempts the child due to religious beliefs pursuant to subsection (1)(b) of this section is not required to have the form provided for in (a) of this subsection signed by a health care practitioner if the parent or legal guardian demonstrates membership in a religious body or a church in which the religious beliefs or teachings of the church preclude a health care practitioner from providing medical treatment to the child.

(3) For purposes of this section, "health care practitioner" means a physician licensed under chapter 18.71 or 18.57 RCW, a naturopath licensed under chapter 18.36A RCW, a physician assistant licensed under chapter 18.71A or 18.57A RCW, or an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW.

(4) Notwithstanding any conditions for exemption provided in this section, if the COVID-19 vaccine is added to the list of required vaccinations, any parent or legal guardian of the child or any adult in loco parentis to the child may exempt the child from the requirement for any reason using a form prescribed by the department of health.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.210.090 and 2020 c 80 s 27 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Any child shall be exempt in whole or in part from the immunization measures required by RCW 28A.210.060 through 28A.210.170 upon the presentation of any one or more of the certifications required by this section, on a form prescribed by the department of health:

(a) A written certification signed by a health care practitioner that a particular vaccine required by rule of the state board of health is, in his or her judgment, not advisable for the child: PROVIDED, That when it is determined that this particular vaccine is no longer contraindicated, the child will be required to have the vaccine;

(b) A written certification signed by any parent or legal guardian of the child or any adult in loco parentis to the child that the religious beliefs of the signator are contrary to the required immunization measures; or

(c) A written certification signed by any parent or legal guardian of the child or any adult in loco parentis to the child that the signator has either a philosophical or personal objection to the immunization of the child. A philosophical or personal objection may not be used to exempt a child from the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine.

(2)(a) The form presented on or after July 22, 2011, must include a statement to be signed by a health care practitioner stating that he or she provided the signator with information about the benefits and risks of immunization to the child. The form may be signed by a health care practitioner at any time prior to the enrollment of the child in a school or licensed day care. Photocopies of the signed form or a letter from the health care practitioner referencing the child's name shall be accepted in lieu of the original form.

(b) A health care practitioner who, in good faith, signs the statement provided for in (a) of this subsection is immune from civil liability for providing the signature.

(c) Any parent or legal guardian of the child or any adult in loco parentis to the child who exempts the child due to religious beliefs pursuant to subsection (1)(b) of this section is not required to have the form provided for in (a) of this subsection signed by a health care practitioner if the parent or legal guardian demonstrates membership in a religious body or a church in which the religious beliefs or teachings of the church preclude a health care practitioner from providing medical treatment to the child.

(3) For purposes of this section, "health care practitioner" means a physician licensed under chapter 18.71 or 18.57 RCW, a naturopath licensed under chapter 18.36A RCW, a physician assistant licensed under chapter 18.71A RCW, or an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW.

(4) Notwithstanding any conditions for exemption provided in this section, if the COVID-19 vaccine is added to the list of required vaccinations, any parent or legal guardian of the child or any adult in loco parentis to the child may exempt the child from the requirement for any reason using a form prescribed by the department of health.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 and 2 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and take effect immediately.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 3 of this act takes effect July 1, 2022.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 2 of this act expires July 1, 2022.

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