
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1531

Brief Description: Preserving the ability of public officials to address communicable diseases.

Sponsors: Representatives Bronoske, Berry, Ramel, Reed, Duerr, Kloba, Macri, Parshley, Peterson, Ormsby, Pollet, Scott, Doglio, Hill and Simmons.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires public health responses to communicable diseases to be guided by the best available science.

Hearing Date: 1/31/25

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

Public health activities, including public health responses to communicable diseases, are carried out at the state and local level by the Department of Health, the State Board of Health, and local health jurisdictions. For example, the Secretary of Health is required to investigate outbreaks and epidemics of disease and advise local health officers on measures to control such outbreaks and epidemics. Similarly, local health jurisdictions are required to prevent the spread of dangerous, contagious, or infectious diseases and take measures necessary to promote the public health. Local health jurisdictions are also required to institute disease control measures, including testing, counseling, treatment, and vaccination.

Summary of Bill:

It is declared the policy of the state that public health responses to address communicable diseases be guided by the best available science on the safety and efficacy of evidence-based

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measures to control the spread of such diseases, including immunizations and vaccines. State and local officials must, within available resources, implement and promote evidence-based, appropriate measures to control the spread of communicable diseases, including vaccines.

The state and its political subdivisions may not enact statutes, ordinances, rules, or policies that prohibit the implementation and promotion of such measures. Any such statute, ordinance, rule, or policy is declared null and void.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 2025.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.