

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS COALITION

Protecting the Religious and Conscientious Beliefs of Californians

A Campaign to Impact Policymakers in 2023

Overview

In light of recent efforts to mitigate COVID-19 spread, many private and public entities have added COVID-19 vaccine requirements as a condition of access to employment and education as well as participation in travel, entertainment, and businesses.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 grants employees in every state the right to religious accommodations to vaccines that are required as a condition of employment, but this protection is not currently extended to students who attend public and private schools in California. Vaccination status based on religious or conscientious beliefs should not be used to exclude students from in-person education or individuals from participating in society.

Goals

1. Protect the religious rights of Californians by expanding access to religious and conscientious beliefs exemptions.
2. Gather a list of support for a religious and conscientious belief statement which will be used to impact policymakers at every level of government.

Support Statement

Article One of the California Constitution recognizes every person's "right to the free exercise and enjoyment of religion without discrimination or preference," describing this right as "liberty of conscience." I support the rights of families or individuals to make health decisions, without coercion, discrimination, or segregation, based on religious and conscientious beliefs. This includes the existence of religious and conscientious beliefs exemptions from required vaccines, with those exempted retaining the ability to fully access, without onerous restrictions, in-person employment, education, public resources, and any other function of society.



Urgent Need

This past legislative session, several California state bills were introduced in an effort to codify into statutory law many of the COVID-19 vaccine requirements that private and public entities had implemented, however, some of the vaccine mandate bills would not have allowed for conscientious and religious beliefs exemptions. Religious Rights Coalition must be prepared to protect religious liberty in California by having massive support from religious, organization and education leaders via this sign on statement project.

Scan the QR Code to Sign On in Support of the Statement

ReligiousRightsCoalition.org

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS COALITION

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What are religious rights and protections?**

Religious rights, or freedom of religion, are protected by the first amendment and are not limited to individuals who are part of an organized religion. Religious protections guard against discrimination which involves treating a person unfavorably because of his or her religious beliefs.

2. **What constitutes religious and conscientious beliefs?**

A belief in a supreme being is not required, but there must be a belief that is sincere and meaningful that occupies a place in the life of its possessor parallel to that filled by the orthodox belief in God. The belief must be more than a philosophy, moral, ethic, or way of life and usually addresses fundamental and ultimate questions having to do with deep and imponderable matters. Religious and conscientious beliefs are based on an individual's sincerely held beliefs and cannot be questioned, but the sincerity of those beliefs can be.

3. **Why would someone object to vaccination or a specific vaccine based on religion or conscientious beliefs?**

For some people, religious or conscientious beliefs influence making health decisions, including those related to vaccination. Religious or conscientious objections or reasons to decline vaccination might include: the belief that the body is a temple or made in the perfect image of a higher power, the use of animal or aborted fetal cells lines in the testing or manufacturing of vaccines, or issues of moral conscience.

4. **Will religious leaders need to write or sign religious and conscientious beliefs exemptions?**

No. The validity of sincerely held religious or conscientious beliefs is not determined by whether or not the religious group to which the individual professes to belong accepts the belief.

5. **Why are religious leaders and faith based organizations needed to sign on in support?**

Some legislators may not understand how religious and conscientious beliefs might be in opposition to vaccination. When religious leaders and faith based organizations support the rights of individuals to follow their sincerely held religious and conscientious convictions, it lends validity to the need for exemptions protecting those beliefs.

6. **If I sign the Support Statement, how will my information be used?**

Your address will be used to determine your California legislative districts for the purpose of informing policy makers of constituent support. By signing the statement, you agree to sharing your name, city, and zip code with your legislators, elected officials, and other decision makers. Your information will not be sold or shared with any other third party entity.