



To whom it may concern,

This email is *an alert* regarding current legislation passing through the California assembly March of 2023.

AB659. Cancer Prevention Act, Aguiar-Curry. “This bill, the Cancer Prevention Act, would add human papillomavirus (HPV) to the above-described list of diseases for which immunization documentation is required. The bill would specifically prohibit the governing authority from unconditionally admitting or advancing any pupil to the 8th grade level of any private or public elementary or secondary school if the pupil has not been fully immunized against HPV. The bill would clarify the department’s authority to adopt HPV-related regulations for grades below the 8th grade level.”

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240AB659](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB659)

1. AB 659 will mandate HPV vaccination for all 8th grade students as a condition of enrollment with only strict medical exemptions granted by the state.
2. Will “expand the coverage requirement for an annual cervical cancer screening test to disability insurance policies that provide coverage for hospital, medical, or surgical benefits and would require a health care service plan contract or disability insurance policy that provides coverage for hospital, medical, or surgical benefits issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2024, to provide coverage without cost sharing for the HPV vaccine for persons for whom the vaccine is FDA approved. Because a willful violation of the bill’s requirements relative to health care service plans would be a crime, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would also expand comprehensive clinical family planning services under the Family PACT Waiver Program to include the HPV vaccine for persons for whom it is FDA approved.”

Protection of the Educational Rights of Kids, PERK, is a non-profit, non-partisan organization with a mission to protect education rights. PERK finds it necessary to request the removal of sections 3 and 4 of AB 659 regarding the HPV vaccine mandate, for the following reasons:

1. Necessity of minimal requirements for school enrollment.
2. Alternative recommendations to support efforts to prevent cancer:
  - o 1. Insurance portion of AB659 and
  - o 2. Working to improve education and access for HPV prevention. Existing California Policies are effective and can continue to improve to further protect the public.
    - a. Children currently learn about HPV at school with the required sex ed curriculum, AND
    - b. California reproductive rights laws allow 8<sup>th</sup> graders/minors 12 and older to consent to the HPV vaccine, medical diagnosis and treatment for sexually transmitted infections without parental knowledge or consent. (SB 158: Weiner)

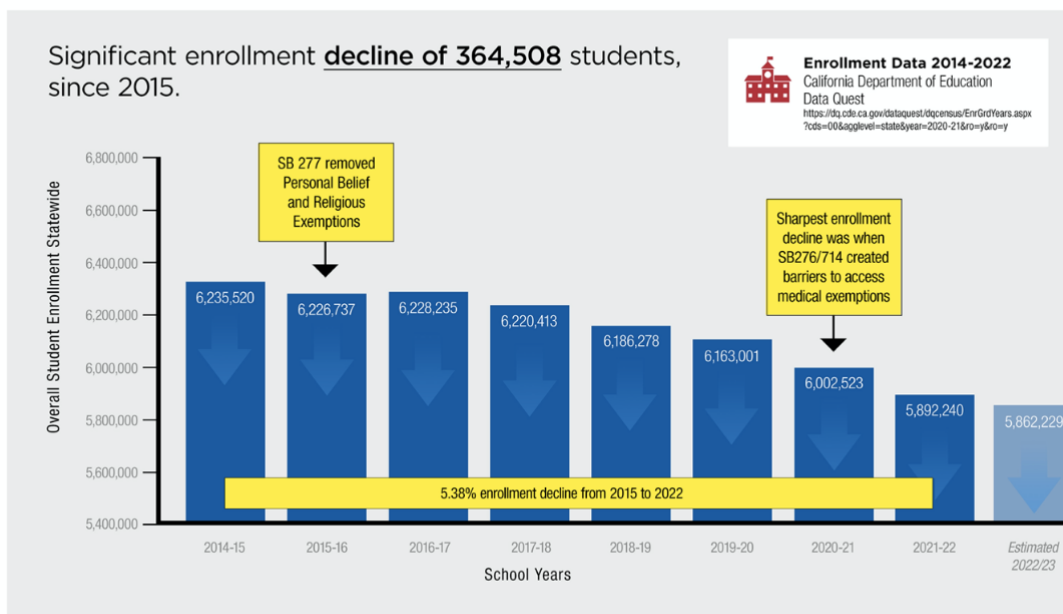
Furthermore, California already has policies for prevention education and access that appear to be effective based on rising HPV vaccination rates without mandating the vaccine for school enrollment. With a current



HPV vaccination rate of 75% for adolescents without a mandate, the insurance portion of this bill will also expand access. [Please see additional problems with the bill here.](#)

Enrollment rates across the state have been in decline since the 2014-2015 school year, losing over 343,000 students in less than a decade. Working to improve cancer prevention without creating additional requirements for school enrollment is a priority. A mandate can create chilling effects, including impacts on enrollment. (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr22/yr22rel20.asp>)

## Removal of Personal Belief/Religious Exemptions Have Contributed to Enrollment Decline



From 2015/16 to 2022/23 Enrollment has decreased by 364,508. In 2021-22 alone, there was a decrease of more than 110,000 students. This follows a steady decline in public school enrollment statewide since 2014-15.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr22/yr22rel20.asp>

State Enrollment - Over the next ten years, if current trends in fertility and migration hold, a further decline of 524,000 in total enrollment is projected by 2030-31. [https://k12.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/public\\_k-12\\_graded\\_enrollment/](https://k12.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/public_k-12_graded_enrollment/)

\*\*5.37195% decline from 2015 to 2022.

\*\*\* Sharpest decline in enrollment was when SB 276/714 went into effect in 2020.

© 2023 Protection of the Educational Rights of Kids. All rights reserved. 03/2023 PERK-Group.com



We support the sections of AB659 regarding insurance. We are asking that you submit an official letter of opposition to the mandate portion of the bill, removing sections 3 and 4. Make your submission to the Assembly Health Committee by March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. AB659 could be heard as early as March 14<sup>th</sup>.

For instructions on submitting official opposition to the legislative portal visit: [www.perk.com/letters-to-legislators](http://www.perk.com/letters-to-legislators)

Thank you for your timely attention to this matter.

Jessica Cabrera  
Director of Operations and Advocacy  
[Jcabrera@PERK-Group.com](mailto:Jcabrera@PERK-Group.com)

3401 Grande Vista Dr. #723, Newbury Park, CA, 91319, [www.PERK-group.com](http://www.PERK-group.com), [info@PERK-group.com](mailto:info@PERK-group.com)