

# California vaccine bills signed by Newsom as protesters are arrested at Capitol

BY MELODY GUTIERREZ STAFF WRITER  
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SACRAMENTO — California will enact sweeping new restrictions on medical exemptions for vaccines under bills signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday, despite near-constant protests in the state Capitol that resulted in arrests after opponents blocked entrances to the statehouse and temporarily shut down legislative sessions.

Newsom signed Senate Bill 276 by Sen. Richard Pan (D-Sacramento) soon after the state Legislature gave final approval to a separate bill, SB 714, that contained fixes sought by the governor. Newsom also signed SB 714.

Newsom said the legislation “provides new tools to better protect public health, and does so in a way that ensures parents, doctors, public health officials and school administrators all know the rules of the road moving forward.”

Together the two bills would create state oversight of medical exemptions for vaccines required to attend public and private schools, as well as day care centers.

On Monday, the Senate passed SB 714 27-11, while the Assembly approved it 43-14. After the vote in the Assembly, protesters shut down the floor session with chants of “protect our children” as lawmakers hurriedly left the chamber. The Legislature passed SB 276 last week.

“I thank the Governor for standing with science, and once again making California a leader in safeguarding children and communities from diseases that threaten our public health,” Pan said in a statement after Newsom signed his bill. “It is my hope that parents whose vulnerable children could die from vaccine-preventable diseases will be reassured that we are protecting communities that have been left vulnerable because a few unscrupulous doctors are undermining community immunity by selling inappropriate medical exemptions.”

California already has some of the nation’s tightest childhood immunization laws, allowing doctors to excuse children, either temporarily or permanently, from some or all vaccinations if there is a medical reason.

Supporters of the legislation have alleged that a handful of doctors are writing unnecessary exemptions, prompting lawmakers to introduce SB 276 to create state oversight of the process. Last week, Newsom unexpectedly withdrew his pledge to sign the bill, instead asking for a major overhaul of the legislation that his office called “technical — but important.”

The requested changes, which were put into SB 714 and made public on Friday, call for delaying when some medical exemptions would be reviewed by the state, but also invalidate medical exemptions written by doctors who have faced disciplinary action, regardless of whether the punishment was related to immunizations.

Opponents of the vaccine bills had hoped Newsom would loosen guidelines on who would qualify for medical exemptions under SB 276, or that the governor's reluctance was a signal he would veto the bill. Instead, the companion bill seemed to anger anti-vaccine activists, who have remained a fixture outside the governor's office.

On Monday morning, three women were detained for blocking the garage entrance to the Capitol, which is used by lawmakers, as protests continued outside the statehouse. Seven arrests were made as of Monday afternoon, California Highway Patrol officials said.

"SB 714 did not make the underlying bill better; in many respects it made it much worse," said Leigh Dundas of the opposition group Advocates for Physicians' Rights.

"We are not going to comply," said parent Celena Mesa of Los Angeles. "We are not going to vaccinate our kids ... I don't know what we are going to do. My kids love school. They don't want to home school. I honestly don't know what the next step is."

Hundreds of parents have protested the bill since it was introduced this year, arguing that it would interfere with the doctor-patient relationship and that the restrictions would make doctors hesitant to write new medical exemptions.

"Even with your amendments, I do not believe I will be writing any more exemptions, even when I feel like they would be appropriate," said Dr. Dane Fliedner, an Aliso Viejo pediatrician specializing in holistic medicine, in a letter to Newsom. "I do not believe anyone else will either ... I have had to put a complete moratorium on medical exemptions due to the nature of this legislation."

Under SB 714, medical exemptions written before Jan. 1 would not come under state scrutiny until a child needs a new one. New medical exemptions would be required when a child enters kindergarten, seventh grade or changes schools. The provision lays out checkpoints similar to those used when the state phased out the use of vaccine exemptions based on personal or religious beliefs in 2015.

The state would also restrict temporary vaccine exemptions to a one-year timeline.

While the protests have played out prominently in the Capitol, there remains strong support for requiring children to be immunized to attend schools. A statewide survey in May by the nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California found 73% of adults believe parents should be required to vaccinate their children.

The bills come amid the worst measles outbreak in more than 20 years, with more than 1,200 people diagnosed with the disease this year in the United States.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-09-09/vaccine-critics-swarm-sacramento-as-effort-to-scrutinize-child-exemptions-moves-forward>

# Vaccine bill protester threw blood on California senators, investigation confirms

BY TARYN LUNA - STAFF WRITER – LA TIMES  
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SACRAMENTO — A red liquid thrown by a protester from the visitors gallery of the California Senate chamber in an “unanticipated attack” on state lawmakers during the final night of the legislative session was found to be blood, according to the state Senate.

Secretary of the Senate Erika Contreras sent an email to staff members on Wednesday that said “lab tests confirmed that the substance thrown from the Senate gallery was human blood.” Safety precautions were taken in hiring a company certified in hazard cleanup to sanitize the chamber, and the blood tested negative for any blood-borne pathogens or infections, Contreras wrote.

California Highway Patrol officers arrested Rebecca Dalelio, 43, on assault and vandalism charges shortly after she allegedly tossed what officials said at time “appeared to be blood” from a menstrual cup onto several members of the state Senate on Sept. 13.

Dalelio was among dozens of protesters who came to the state Capitol that day to oppose a pair of bills that Gov. Gavin Newsom had signed into law to create new oversight of vaccine exemptions for schoolchildren. A voice in the crowd said it was “for the dead babies” as the contents of the cup were thrown onto lawmakers.

Senate officials immediately cleared the chamber and roped off the floor. Some lawmakers left to shower and at least one legislator was treated for blood exposure the next day.

With the chamber temporarily shut down, the Senate reconvened hours later in a committee hearing room for the first time in decades and took final action on legislation, eventually adjourning for the year around 3 a.m. the next day. The Senate chamber remained closed until Wednesday. The vaccine legislation sparked weeks of intense protests over the summer in Sacramento, with hundreds packing into hearing rooms to voice their opposition. An anti-vaccine activist accosted Sen. Richard Pan (D-Sacramento), who wrote the bill, near the Capitol in August.

Dalelio, a resident of Boulder Creek, near Santa Cruz, is scheduled to be arraigned Nov. 18 in Sacramento, although a criminal complaint has not been filed against her at this time.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-10-02/vaccine-law-protester-blood-california-state-senate>