

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R12396 MCF-D

S.B. 2119
By: Sparks
Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Under the Texas Administrative Code, students enrolled in non-veterinary health-related courses and veterinary health-related courses must receive a series of vaccines, even if they have a religious or conscience objection to receiving a vaccination. The option to receive a conscience exemption for a vaccination is extended to K-12 students and many other students in higher education. However, students enrolled in medical or veterinary schools do not have such exemption. Healthcare students must receive measles, mumps, tetanus-diphtheria, rubella, hepatitis B, and chickenpox vaccines. Veterinarians are required to receive the rabies, tetanus-diphtheria, and hepatitis B vaccines.

As proposed, S.B. 2119 amends current law relating to an exemption from certain immunization requirements for medical and veterinary students.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 161.0041(a), Health and Safety Code, as follows:

(a) Requires a person claiming an exemption from a required immunization based on reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, under certain sections, including Section 161.0053 of the Health and Safety Code, to complete an affidavit on a form provided by the Department of State Health Services stating the reason for the exemption.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 161, Health and Safety Code, by adding Section 161.0053, as follows:

Sec. 161.0053. IMMUNIZATION EXEMPTION FOR MEDICAL OR VETERINARY STUDENT. (a) Defines "institution of higher education," "medical school," and "school of veterinary medicine."

(b) Prohibits a student enrolled in a medical school or school of veterinary medicine, notwithstanding Section 51.933 (Immunization Requirements; Exception), Education Code, from being required to receive an immunization as a prerequisite to enrollment or participation in a course offered by the medical school or school of veterinary medicine if the student submits to the school's admitting official an affidavit signed by the student stating the student declines immunization for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief.

(c) Requires that an affidavit submitted under Subsection (b) be on a form described by Section 161.0041 (Immunization Exemption Affidavit Form) and submitted to the admitting official not later than the 90th day after the date the affidavit is notarized.

SECTION 3. Provides that Section 161.0053, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with the 2025–2026 school year.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.