



For Immediate Release  
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## Vaccines & Senate Bill 277: Fact vs. Myth

**SACRAMENTO** – To help combat misinformation that continues to be perpetuated by some individuals opposed to Senate Bill 277 (Pan/Allen), the I Heart Immunity Campaign, a group of doctors, patients, and public health officials dedicated to increasing vaccination rates, distributed the following Fact vs. Myth sheet:

- ✗ **MYTH:** Vaccines cause **autism**. **FALSE.**
- ✓ **FACT:** Vaccines do not cause autism. In 1998, Andrew Wakefield falsified data to inaccurately represent a link between autism and vaccines. The study has since been retracted by the journal that published it. Numerous subsequent studies worldwide involving hundreds of thousands of children have proved that vaccines are safe and that there is no link between vaccines and autism. Further investigation also revealed that Wakefield was paid more than \$674,000 by a product liability attorney to falsify his data.
- ✗ **MYTH:** Childhood vaccines contain **thimerosal** (mercury) which is dangerous. **FALSE.**
- ✓ **FACT:** Thimerosal – a preservative containing mercury – has not been present in routine childhood vaccines since 2001. Although there is no convincing evidence of harm caused by the low doses of thimerosal in vaccines, Thimerosal was eliminated in routine childhood vaccines as a precautionary measure. Both the flu shot and some vaccines for adults and older children can be found in thimerosal-free versions, or with only trace amounts that are not toxic to the human body.
- ✗ **MYTH:** The **volume of vaccines** children receive is unsafe. **FALSE.**
- ✓ **FACT:** Science has proven that it is safe to give children simultaneous vaccines or vaccine combinations and scientific evidence shows that giving multiple vaccinations at the same time has no adverse effect on a child's immune system. Today, children receive more vaccinations than in the past because advances in medical science have given rise to more vaccines to protect us from dangerous diseases. Children need the vaccinations because the vaccinations save lives.
- ✗ **MYTH:** SB 277 would **force parents** to vaccinate. **FALSE.**
- ✓ **FACT:** This bill does not take away a parent's rights to make decisions about their children's healthcare. It only requires that children be vaccinated in order to attend school to protect the health of the school community.

✗ **MYTH:** SB 277 would **prevent children who need them** from receiving exemptions. **FALSE.**

✓ **FACT:** SB 277 leaves to the discretion of doctors when a child requires a medical exemption from required vaccinations.

✗ **MYTH:** The push for vaccines is about **profit.** **FALSE.**

✓ **FACT:** Vaccine adoption recommendations are driven by good science, period. Vaccines are not money-makers for doctors, while vaccines account for only about 1.5 percent of total pharmaceutical revenues, according to the Penn Center for Bioethics. In fact, so few pharmaceutical companies are now making vaccines that there has been a problem with vaccine supply.

✗ **MYTH:** It is better to be **immunized through disease** than through vaccines. **FALSE.**

✓ **FACT:** Vaccines interact with the immune system to produce an immune response similar to that produced by the natural infection, but they do not cause the disease or put the immunized person at risk of its potential complications. In contrast, the price paid for getting immunity through natural infection might be mental retardation from Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), birth defects from rubella, liver cancer from hepatitis B virus, or death from measles.

✗ **MYTH:** Vaccines **contain aborted fetuses.** **FALSE.**

✓ **FACT:** Vaccines do not contain fetal tissue. Vaccines do not contain human cells or tissue. This claim is based on the fact that some vaccines were originally grown in cell cultures that derived from fetal cell lines obtained some fifty years ago. But no aborted fetal tissue or cells are present in the vaccines. In fact, the National Catholic Bioethics Center has said that Catholics are "morally free to use the vaccine."

✗ **MYTH:** People who get vaccinated can "**shed**" the virus and infect others. **FALSE.**

✓ **FACT:** There are no vaccines in use today that have been shown to "shed" and get other people sick.

✗ **MYTH:** Parents removing their children from school as a result of SB 277 will **impact school funding.** **FALSE**

✓ **FACT:** California schools depend on Proposition 98 to set school funding formulas and this bill will not have any impact on those revenue sources. This is just the latest scare tactic some people have used to avoid the real topic at hand—the health and safety of Californians. That is why many school boards and education groups are supporting SB 277, including the Los Angeles Unified School District, the San Francisco Unified School District, the Solano Beach School District the California School Boards Association and the California School Employees Association.