

Oral Testimony

By Rabbi Michael Green

Thank you.

My name is Michael Green. I'm an orthodox rabbi, lecturer and published author here in New England.

This bill is unconscionable to me because it constitutes a grave violation of our first amendment rights.

The claim that "no religion opposes vaccination" is patently false.

[Besides for the fact that religion is not monolithic, and that everyone is entitled to their own moral, ethical, or philosophic beliefs...]

I am here today to represent Judaism, the world's original Abrahamic faith.

Judaism strictly prohibits the current vaccine policy.

The use of aborted fetal DNA constitutes a grave desecration of human life, a violation of the Noahide Laws, a universal code of morality in Genesis chapter 9.

Do not believe so-called experts who claim that Judaism supports vaccination. These people are unlearned and unfamiliar with the actual sources, and are misrepresenting Judaism.

I spent the entire summer this past year corresponding with prominent orthodox rabbis throughout the country. Not one single rabbi endorsed the mandatory vaccine policy. Not ONE SINGLE rabbi, endorsed the

hepatitis-B vaccine. Instead, they ALL conceded that it's against Jewish law to subject one's young child to it, since there's no significant risk factor that would justify the injection, which is a violation of Deuteronomy 14:1 and 4:15.

So why aren't they here protesting?

Rabbis are fearful of antisemitism. It's "generational ptsd," afraid of being blamed for disease, as was done to Jews throughout the middle ages, in Nazi Germany, and still today in the Arab media.

So, many rabbis are silent on the vaccine policy, even though it goes against their better conscience.

I'm here to tell you the truth.

Judaism does NOT endorse the current vaccine schedule.

Moreover, the fact that it's mandatory is an assault on the very concept of religion, that a human being is subordinate only to one's Divine creator. In effect, there is no religion that does *NOT* support religious exemption.

But what about the alleged benefits of vaccination to society?

Number one, herd immunity is not a Biblical value, and has zero basis in Judaic law. I am responsible for my child's health only, and not for some statistical or theoretical health of a so-called herd.

Yes, there is mutual responsibility for community, but not at the cost of risk to one self or one's child, even the slightest risk.

Every single vaccine carries a risk. This is an undisputed fact. The Supreme Court ruled in 2010 that vaccines are "unavoidably unsafe."

But even if there is societal benefit to vaccination, the ends do NOT justify the means.

We cannot claim to be trying to benefit the majority by persecuting the minority and usurping their First Amendment rights to religious freedom and bodily autonomy.

We may NOT discriminate against healthy children simply because they are staying true to their family's moral, ethical, or philosophic values.

These children pose a danger to NO ONE.

That is a scientific fact and everyone knows it.

This has nothing to do with keeping anyone safe, but only about unjustly enforcing a policy. Hepatitis-B is the proof.

Education is a right. We cannot deny a child an education.

Stop bill HB5044.

Written Testimony

By Rabbi Michael Green

It's time to call out the "Emperor's New Clothes" of our times.

The states' recent obsession to eliminate religious exemption is based on numerous falsehoods. Let's expose them one by one:

- "No major religion opposes vaccines."

False. Judaism prohibits current vaccine schedule for several reasons [1]. The schedule is also a grave violation of the Seven Noahide Laws, a universal code for all humankind [2]. The fact that it's mandatory is an assault on the very concept of religion, i.e. that a human being is subordinate only to his/her Divine creator. In effect, there is no major world religion that does *not* support religious exemption. [3] [4]

- "Vaccines are safe. The science is settled."

False. The Supreme Court ruled in 2011 that vaccines are "unavoidably unsafe." The CDC delineates serious side-effects for every single vaccine. These risks are also disclosed by vaccine makers in each vaccine insert.

- "Vaccine policy is about keeping your child safe."

False. Vaccine policy is about state enforcing its policy, and has nothing to do with keeping my child safe. My six-year-old child is not at risk of

catching Hepatitis B, for example, yet she cannot attend school due to this draconian policy even if she has received all other vaccines except for Hep-B.

- "Vaccine policy is all about ensuring herd immunity."

False. Vaccine policy is about state enforcing its policy, and not about any herd. Proof: Hepatitis B and tetanus are not contagious through casual contact, yet it's on the schedule. Moreover, a child who is infected with Hep-B can even attend school.

- "Recent measles outbreak is a wake-up call to eliminate religious exemption."

False and deliberately misleading. States are threatening to eliminate religious exemption for the *entire* schedule, not just for measles. The "measles outbreak" is just fear-mongering. If this were truly about concern over measles, they'd be attempting to eliminate religious exemption for the measles vaccine only, and they'd make sure there was a vaccine for measles independent of mumps, rubella, and varicella.

- "It's safer to vaccinate your child than to leave her unvaccinated."

Not necessarily. Your child has zero chance of catching polio here in the United States where the last wild variety case was in 1979, and the last imported case was in 1993. However, children are injured each year by the polio vaccine. 22 deaths reported to VAERS (which only reflects a small percentage of actual injuries and deaths) since 2010, and hundreds of injuries. Same with measles and other shots.

- "Risk from vaccine is less than risk from actual disease."

Not necessarily. 1,200 Americans caught measles this past year with not one single fatality, but deaths and injuries due to MMR vaccine are reported each year by VAERS [5]. 96 deaths due to MMR vaccine since 2003 and one or two deaths from actual measles.

- "Unvaccinated child poses risk to public so s/he may be banned from school."

False. Healthy unvaccinated child poses actual risk to no one. A child who is sick with contagious disease should be quarantined, whether s/he had been previously vaccinated or not. A healthy child presents no risk to anyone simply because s/he lacks immunity to a disease.

- "Unvaccinated child is at a higher statistical risk of catching a contagious disease, and therefore may be banned from school to protect 'herd immunity'."

False. Even if it is true that there is higher statistical risk for unvaccinated child to contract (and spread) disease, we may not ban anyone from school because of statistical risk, but only because of *actual* risk. Example: we may **not** ban a child from school just because he comes from an ethnic or religious background that has statistically-higher incidents of radicalization or offenders of school violence. There must be an actual and present risk, not statistical or theoretical.

- Most people who claim religious exemption are not religious, but just using it as a loophole.

Irrelevant. Religion is defined as an individual's personal, moral, ethical, or philosophical beliefs. Everyone is entitled to religious beliefs, irrespective of whether that person openly identifies as "religious." Moreover, the First Amendment is no mere "loophole." It is sacrosanct and inviolable tenet of our nation's constitution. Anyone may cite it, just as anyone may cite the Fifth Amendment, or any other amendment. The state may not tamper with it.

- "Most people who cite religious exemption are not opposed to the vaccine due to specifically-religious reasons, but rather are apprehensive that it's unsafe, which is not a *religious* reason but rather a health concern. No such exemption exists for unsubstantiated health concerns.

Inaccurate. *Pikuach nefesh* is a religious tenet in Judaism that transcends nearly all others. Doing something you fear is unsafe violates a religious prohibition. Even if a plethora of doctors vouch for its safety, if you have reservations due to your own or others' adverse experiences -- and *especially* if your fears are confirmed by expert physicians who have cautioned against it, even if they are in the minority -- then it is absolutely forbidden to expose your child to risk against your better conscience. This is a religious precept like any other. More importantly, Judaism recognizes valid religious grounds to decline *any* vaccine that you and your health care expert deem unnecessary.[6]

- "Rabbi S. says Judaism requires vaccination, so Judaism can't possibly recognize religious exemption."

False and juvenile. Rabbi S may speak for himself, but he does not get to speak for Judaism. Judaism isn't monolithic; it has room for differing views. Even members of his own community or congregation are entitled to hold different views than his. In fact, he represents the tiny minority of rabbis, since no respected rabbinical imprimatur has *ever* been offered for the hepatitis-B vaccine, which is part of the mandatory schedule. To this date, no responsa from any noted rabbinic authority has ever been written in defense of this vaccine. Consequently, normative orthodox Judaism does *not* support current schedule in any way and most certainly exempts adherents on firm religious grounds.

- But a prominent Jewish doctor advocates for vaccines, as do most medical doctors. Doesn't Judaism say that we must follow the majority view of physicians?

No. Judaism makes no such claim. Instead, Judaism advises to heed the opinion of the most expert physicians who have actual experience in diagnosing the disease in question. In this discussion, the disease in question isn't measles (for example), but the condition of vaccine injury. Your prominent doctor friend has no experience in toxicology or in researching or diagnosing vaccine injury, so his opinion is completely irrelevant [7], as are the views of nearly all doctors who advocate for vaccine schedule.

- Nothing is changing to mandatory vaccine policy. The state granted religious exemption in the past, so it is entitled to withdraw it.

False. The state never "granted" religious exemption. Religious freedom is untouchable. The Bill of Rights doesn't grant us this freedom either, but rather it prohibits state from tampering with it in any way. Religious freedom and personal bodily autonomy are inherent and God-given. The state has *no* right to interfere with them.

- "Measles was eradicated but the unvaccinated population brought it back."

False. Measles was never eradicated. 86 cases in 2000 alone, the year it was declared eradicated! [8] Measles will never be eradicated, since vaccine is only 93% effective and only provides temporary immunity. In fact, most teenagers have been found to lack immunity even after having two doses as a young child.

- "Increase in unvaccinated population will bring back dreaded diseases like polio."

Not necessarily. Polio was on the decline before vaccines were in use. Same with measles.

- "Whoever who opposes vaccine schedule is an 'antivaxxer.'"

False. There are plenty of parents who give some vaccinations but decline others for valid personal, religious or philosophical reasons. They cannot be called "anti-vaccine." They are simply opposed to the mandatory schedule.

- "If you are writing this, you must be an 'antivaxxer.'"

False. You have no idea about my medical choices. Your assumption is simply a convenient means to evade these serious discussions via "guilt by association," since you're apparently too lazy or feeble-minded to critically examine my arguments. I am *not* opposed to vaccination. Instead, I am opposed to force-medicating people and to banning healthy children from school. Moreover, I object to group-think or "herd thinking," such as you have demonstrated by your ad hominem rhetoric.

- "'Antivaxxers' are anti-science."

Wrong. People who choose not to vaccinate are not opposed to science, since science does not make moral judgments. It merely proves hypotheses based on empirical evidence. Even if scientists had indeed demonstrated that 95% vaccination rate ensures "herd immunity," the decision to vaccinate is still a moral one. A religious Jew makes moral decisions based on Torah values, and "herd immunity" has no basis in Jewish law.

- "It's reckless to not take available precautions to avoid contagious disease, so people who don't vaccinate are reckless."

False. When is it irresponsible to not make use of an available precaution to illness? Only if a) the preventative measure entails no risk of its own, and b) it entails no violation of one's personal, ethical, moral, philosophical values. Conversely, if the precaution carries its own risks, or if it is at odds with one's religious (etc) beliefs, then it's not recklessness, but a matter of personal choice.

Do you want to know what's reckless? I'll tell you:

Banning thousands of healthy children from school... *that's* reckless!

Trampling individual civil liberties, usurping bodily autonomy, violating religious freedoms... that is perilously reckless.

Bill HB5044 is the **epitome** of recklessness.

- "If the state's democratically-elected legislature voted to eliminate religious exemption, then it's lawful. That's democracy at work."

Fact: nowhere in the US Constitution or Bill of Rights does the word "democracy" appear. Our founding fathers rightfully feared democracy, which can well become a "dictatorship of the majority." Hitler initially rose to power through democratic elections as well, as did Hamas. Our republic is based on immutable values enshrined in the Bill of Rights, not on whims of majority rule that may well be **unlawful**.

Benjamin Franklin observed: "Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what's for dinner. Liberty is a well-armed lamb showing up to contest the vote."

We are armed with the truth. The truth will prevail.

Notes:

[1] Deuteronomy 14:1 prohibits needle wounds if not for direct curative benefit for patient. Preventative benefit qualifies, but only if it prevents an actual risk of disease. It is dubious whether an STD like Hep-B or HPV poses any substantive risk to a young child, or to any orthodox Jewish child. Deuteronomy 4:15 prohibits exposing oneself to risk, even negligible risk, and even for the sake of a so-called herd. Avoda Zara 29b prohibits deriving benefit from human cadavers. Abortion is akin to murder, as per Genesis 9:6. It is forbidden to compensate a company for the abortions and live dissections of human beings that it committed by harvesting the fetal tissue for human cell lines in numerous vaccines. Purchasing vaccines that contain aborted fetal

tissue is a violation of Leviticus 19:14, as it enables and encourages these companies to commit their heinous deeds.

[2] Genesis 9:5 prohibits Noahides from self-inflicting wounds or exposing oneself to risk. Abortion is murder, as per *ibid* 9:6. A Noahide is prohibited from compensating a murderer. Rambam, *Mishne Torah*, Laws of Rotzeach 2:2. See *Sheva Mitzvot HaShem* by Rabbi Moshe Vainer, volume 1, page 58, regarding the precise prohibition of a Noahide of encouraging others to violate the Noahide Code.

[3] The wording of this lie is particularly insidious, since it is deliberately deceptive: this discussion isn't about the idea of vaccination in principle, but about forcing people to have all these specific vaccines. For example, one person's religion might approve of the idea of vaccination in general, but might be opposed to a vaccine for an STD, or for diseases which no longer exist in the United States, like polio. Others might be opposed to vaccines under normal circumstances, but might agree to receive one during a time of outbreak. Yet others might have religious beliefs that preclude several vaccines due to aborted fetal DNA material extracted by live dissection, or because of excessive cruelty to animals, but might agree to general principle behind vaccination. So the statement "No religion opposes vaccination" is nothing more than a straw man meant to deflect and distract from the actual debate.

[4] See here:

[5] VAERS only reflects a small percentage of actual injuries and deaths.

[6] See footnote one above.

[7] *Shulchan Aruch Harav*, Orach Chaim 618:9.

[8]

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/downloads/appendices/appdx-full-e.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1EoF2Tai8uCGzAnM8M3GH-DmCu-PAIStfYb4kUDwHSShd9HHwo4SQUMzw>