

Senator John Loudon's Vaccination Rights Act Earns Committee Hearing

Bill Gives Parents Stronger Voice in Children's Health, Future

JEFFERSON CITY – Legislation giving parents more say in the vaccination of their children introduced and advanced by Senator John Loudon, R-Ballwin, was considered this week by the Senate's aging and families panel. Committee approval would send Loudon's bill, SB 854, to the Senate floor for debate by the full body. Passage in both legislative chambers puts the parental rights act into place.

Current law allows parents only two exemptions from having their children vaccinated: an existing medical condition that could react to the vaccination; a religious belief that does not embrace vaccinations. In working to shift custodial rights from school administrations and state agencies to parents, Loudon's bill adds a third provision: that a philosophical belief can exempt a child from vaccination.

"Vaccinations are widely regarded as beneficial, but this belief is not held by all parents, nor is the entire medical community in agreement on this," Loudon said, who noted that some attribute vaccinations with subsequent complications such as contracting the flu and possibly even leading to autism. "This legislation places the decision making for a child's health care with the parent, where it rightly belongs."

Loudon successfully guided similar legislation through the Senate last year, though the session came to a close before it could be adopted.

"This year, when the health department is proposing adding a sixth mandatory vaccination, I am going to fight to get this proposal into law," Loudon said. "The freedoms to choose and then act on these choices lie in the pages of our Constitution, not on the desks of bureaucrats."

➤ Senator Loudon represents Missouri's 7th Senate District.

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