



Hawaii Chapter

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Organization: American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter
Measure: HB3154, Relating to Health
Committee: HLT; Representative Josh Green, MD, Vice-Chair
Saturday, February 11, 2006
Time: 9:00 am
Room 329
Copies: 25

Testimony in Opposition to HB3154, Relating to Health

HB3154 requires that during the 2006-2007 influenza season preference shall be given to children under ten years of age and pregnant women to receive no vaccine containing more than a trace amount of mercury, defined as 1.25 micrograms per administered dose amount. For the 2007-2008 influenza season, no vaccine or any product may be administered which contains mercury even in trace amounts.

The bill refers to FDA statements which acknowledge the possibility that infants "may have been exposed to cumulative levels of mercury during the first six months of life which exceed EPA standards" when given vaccines containing mercury as a preservative and to the statements issued by the Public Health Service, American Academy of Pediatrics, (AAP) and others on July 7, 1999 urging the reduction or elimination of thimerosal from the vaccines as soon as possible.

The AAP's actual 1999 recommendations was, as a precautionary measure and based on information available at that time, vaccines given to infants during the first six months of life should not contain thimerosal. In contrast, the influenza vaccine is given only to children older than six months.

The Institute of Medicine has published two reports, 2001 and 2004, which refute any causal relationship between thimerosal and neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism. The AAP has supported those findings.

The AAP's position is that the known serious risk of diseases and death caused by failure to immunize infants against vaccine preventable diseases outweighs the unknown and probably smaller risk, if any, from exposure to thimerosal. The AAP believes that immunizations should not be interrupted due to a lack of preservative-free vaccines.

One of the consequences of this legislation, if passed, will be to make parents fearful of all immunizations. The immunization rates will go down and children will become more likely to acquire the dangerous diseases prevented by immunization.

In 2005, although six states have enacted legislation which bans thimerosal, sixteen state legislatures rejected similar bills. So far in 2006, at least one legislature has rejected such legislation.

Passage of this legislation will have only one measurable impact- making the state less able to protect its most vulnerable populations.

The Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics asks that HB3154 not be passed.