

STATE BILLS AFFECTING CHILDHOOD VACCINATION IN THE U.S.

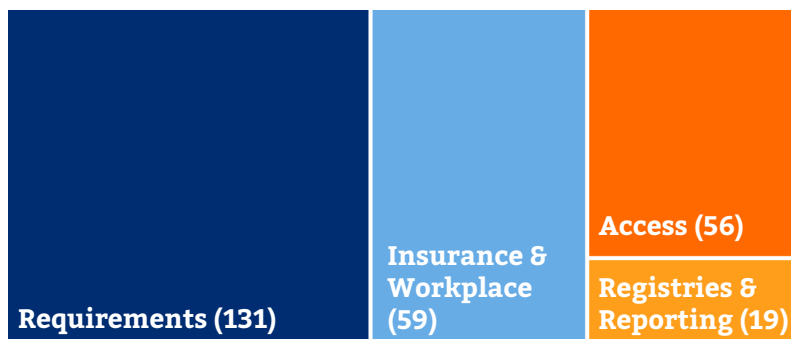
This brief outlines recent legislation introduced at the state level that would impact access to and uptake of routine childhood vaccinations across the United States. Takeaways include:

- **Vaccine-related policy making is dynamic** across all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- Many bills aim to **increase access to childhood vaccines** through pharmacies.
- Lawmakers are increasingly seeking to **loosen school immunization requirements**.

BACKGROUND

State-level policies can facilitate or hinder a child’s access to vaccines, and so **strengthening state policy commitment for vaccination is critical to ensure the public’s health**. For example, children in every state are required to receive measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccines to enroll in kindergarten, yet parents in most states can request non-medical exemptions based on religious, personal, or moral beliefs. States with least and less effective exemption policies had whooping cough incidence rates more than twice as high as those in states with the most effective policies.

Of the 3,000 bills proposed between 2021 and 2025, **bills in 2024 and 2025 focused more on childhood vaccines** than those in earlier years, which focused more on COVID-19 vaccines. Proposed legislation generally fell into four domains, as displayed in the figure to the right. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of bills in each domain.



POLICY TRENDS

There have been several emerging trends in vaccination-related policies. The chart below shows the number of bills in each category.

Expanding the role of pharmacists and other health professionals in administering vaccines



Requiring insurers to fully cover vaccines recommended by ACIP or other organizations



Expanding exemptions to school vaccination requirements



Restricting the promotion of vaccines



Adding requirements to obtain consent for vaccination



Changing rulemaking authority for vaccine campaigns and policies



- Policies that would strengthen immunization programs
- Policies that would weaken immunization programs

Learn more about recent policies in our state briefs!



Sources: CDC, SchoolVaxView Interactive! <https://www.cdc.gov/schoolvaxview/data/index.html>. Updated July 2025.

Phadke VK, Bednarczyk RA, et al. Association Between Vaccine Refusal and Vaccine-Preventable Diseases in the United States: A Review of Measles and Pertussis. JAMA. 2016;315(11):1149-1158. doi:10.1001/jama.2016.1353

Atwell JE, Van Otterloo J, et al. Nonmedical vaccine exemptions and pertussis in California, 2010. Pediatrics. 2013;132(4):624-630. doi:10.1542/peds.2013-0878