

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE ELIMINATION OF PERSONAL AND RELIGIOUS  
BELIEF EXEMPTIONS FROM CALIFORNIA'S VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR  
ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

WHEREAS, measles is the greatest vaccine-preventable killer of children under 15 years old in the world today and;

WHEREAS, the use of a safe and effective vaccine has resulted in a dramatic decline in the number of measles deaths worldwide from more than 2.5 million deaths each year in 1980 to 733,000 deaths in 2000 and 145,700 deaths in 2013; in the United States, before the development of a measles vaccine, an average of 549,000 measles cases, 4,000 cases of measles-related encephalitis, and 495 measles deaths, were reported annually, with the number of yearly unreported cases estimated at 3 to 4 million; by 2000, the widespread use of the measles vaccination led to the near-elimination of measles from our borders, with less than 1 case reported per 1,000 000 people; and

WHEREAS, a small but increasing number of parents have recently chosen to ignore science and put their own children – and ours – at risk of serious illness and death by refusing to vaccinate their children against measles, resulting in a sharp increase in the number of measles cases in the United States, including 644 reported cases in 2014, and more than 100 cases in January of this year, most of them in California; and

WHEREAS, current California law facilitates this dangerous refusal to vaccinate by allowing children to attend school even when their parents and guardians refuse to vaccinate them based on personal or religious beliefs; last year, 3.3% of California's kindergartners – about 18,200 children – were allowed to skip measles vaccinations, putting all of us, and especially our children, at immediate risk of serious illness and death from this highly contagious yet easily preventable disease; a strict vaccine requirement for attendance at school – without exceptions or loopholes based on personal or religious beliefs – would reduce the number of unvaccinated children to a level that would allow protection for everyone.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the California Democratic Party urges all parents to ensure that their children are vaccinated for measles and other preventable infectious diseases.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the California Democratic Party calls for the immediate elimination of personal and religious belief exemptions from California's vaccination requirements for attendance at school.

Sponsored by Michael Fox and Dr. Bill Honigman.