

Date of Hearing: January 23, 2008

Committee: House Health

LATE
Testimony

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: H.B. 1971, Relating to Vaccinations

Purpose: To make all vaccinations in the State non-compulsory but only recommended unless there is danger of an epidemic from any communicable disease. This also allows exemptions from vaccinations on any grounds.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) has conferred with the Department of Health (DOH) regarding the requirements on immunizations for school entry. Neither agency supports the intent of this bill which would change the existing law on immunizations from requirements to recommendations. Currently, there are exceptions where immunizations would endanger a child or those parent(s)/guardian(s) request an exemption based on religion. Data show that increased immunization rates have directly correlated with decreased rates of disease and provide protection not only for the student who is immunized, but also for the students with whom they come in contact during the school day. Therefore, the Department does not support this bill.