



Governor Lamont Signs into Law H.B. 6423, An Act Concerning Immunizations

On April 28, 2021, Governor Lamont announced that he has signed into law legislation impacting Connecticut's immunization requirements for students attending preK-12 schools, day care centers, and institutions of higher education in the state. Specifically, House Bill 6423, *An Act Concerning Immunizations* (the "law") limits the circumstances for which a student or student's parent or guardian may claim an exemption from immunization requirements. The law removes exemptions from immunizations that are not medical in nature.

Although the law, in effect, eliminates the possibility of claiming a religious exemption from immunization for students, the law does not force children to get vaccinated in violation of the religious beliefs of the student or the student's parent/guardian. Families could choose not to vaccinate their children. If a family chooses not to vaccinate their children, the law provides that these students who do not receive vaccinations for non-medical reasons as provided by the law would not be allowed to endanger others in school settings where diseases spread rapidly.

While COVID-19 vaccines are not yet available to children under the age of 16, the law does not take effect until September of 2022. Note, however, that when the COVID-19 vaccine is approved for children under the age of 16, such vaccination would need to be added to the state's list of mandatory vaccinations before this law would apply to COVID-19 vaccinations for students. Additionally, the law allows children who have passed 7th grade and have previously received religious exemptions to immunizations to continue to attend school notwithstanding their unvaccinated status.

Regarding the passage of the law, Governor Lamont stated, "When it comes to the safety of our children, we need to take an abundance of caution. This legislation is needed to protect our kids against serious illnesses that have been well-controlled for many decades, such as measles, tuberculosis, and whooping cough, but have reemerged. In recent years, the number of children in our state who have not received routine vaccinations has been steadily increasing, which has been mirrored by significant growth in preventable diseases across the nation.

I want to make it clear, this law does not take away the choice of parents to make medical decisions for their children. But, if they do choose not to have their children vaccinated, this bill best ensures that other children and their families will not be exposed to these deadly diseases for hours each day in our schools.”

For further information on House Bill 6423, please contact [Christopher L. Brigham](#), Chair of the Employment Law Practice Group at Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C. at (203) 786-8310 or cbrigham@uks.com, [Andrew L. Houlding](#), Principal in the Employment Law Practice Group at (203) 786-8315 or ahoulding@uks.com, [Valerie M. Ferdon](#), Associate Attorney in the Employment Law Practice Group at (860) 548-2607 or vferdon@uks.com; or [Jeffrey Renaud](#), Associate Attorney in the Employment Law Practice Group at (860) 548-2629 or jrenaud@uks.com.

Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C. would like to thank attorney Jeffrey E. Renaud for his contribution to this client alert.

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