



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **REPRESENTATIVE HINTZ INTRODUCES BILL TO INCREASE IMMUNIZATION RATES, REDUCE THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE**

MADISON – Today, Representative Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) re-introduced legislation to eliminate the personal conviction waiver from our state’s vaccination requirement. This legislation is a proactive measure, as hundreds of measles cases continue to be reported in the U.S. in early 2019. As of Monday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have reported [704 individual cases](#) of measles confirmed in 22 states in 2019, the highest number on record since the disease was declared eliminated nationwide in 2000. Representative Hintz discussed this growing public health crisis and his legislation:

**“This legislation is about preserving public health in Wisconsin. It is about protecting our children. With outbreaks nationwide and in our neighboring states, it is only a matter of time before our dropping immunization rates result in a measles, or other infectious disease outbreak somewhere in Wisconsin.”** Rep. Hintz stated. **“It’s simple – states with better requirements for vaccinations have higher vaccination rates and fewer occurrences of outbreaks.”**

Wisconsin currently has one of the broadest exemptions of any state in the country, which makes it easy to opt out of vaccinations. 20 years ago, just 1% of Wisconsin children were opted out of vaccines. Last year, state health records showed that 5.3% of Wisconsin children had been opted out of vaccinations by their parents, more than double the national average. In the same report, over 90% of these vaccination waiver exemptions were for “personal” reasons.

**“Vaccinations are a public health issue and not just parental right. The decision to forgo vaccination poses a threat to others. Especially babies too young to be vaccinated or those who can’t be vaccinated for health reasons. Vaccination is not just about protecting individuals, it is about protecting everyone. People who choose to opt out of vaccinations are only protected by those who are vaccinated and reduced their risk of exposure. Our numbers are heading in the wrong direction, and it is time to act and close the personal waiver loophole.”**

Wisconsin is one of the few states that allows waivers for opting out of vaccinations for medical, religious, and personal reasons. LRB 0312 only addresses the personal conviction waiver. This bill is supported by:

- Wisconsin Medical Society
- WI Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- League of Women Voters (WI Chapter)
- Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin.
- Southern Wisconsin Immunization Coalition
- Medical College of Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Public Health Association
- Wisconsin Assoc. of Local Health Departments and Boards
- Wisconsin Nurses Association
- Aurora Health Care