**TITLE:**

**An act to require the availability of religious exemptions from vaccine mandates imposed by entities that receive or benefit from public funds.**

**PURPOSE:**

Ensures individuals may obtain a religious exemption from any vaccine mandate imposed by entities that receive or benefit from public funds.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

Protects religious freedom by preventing individuals from being coerced to violate their sincerely held religious beliefs as a condition for accessing opportunities, programs, or benefits offered by any entity that receives or benefits from public funds. Reinforces constitutional protections of religious exercise.

**TEXT**

**Religious exemption required by entities receiving public funds.**

Any entity that receives or benefits from public funds shall allow individuals subject to any vaccination requirement imposed by the entity to opt out by submitting a signed form attesting that receiving the vaccine would violate his or her sincerely held religious beliefs. The form shall include:

* (a) name of individual;
* (b) if a minor, name of parent(s) or guardian;
* (c) birthdate;
* (d) the statement: “I hereby certify that compliance with a requirement to receive (insert immunization exempted) would violate my sincerely held religious beliefs.”

No further documentation or verification of the religious beliefs shall be required.

No entity that receives or benefits from public funds may deny, restrict, or condition any right, benefit, opportunity, or privilege—or retaliate in any way—against any person for exercising the right to a religious exemption under this section.

Any entity that violates this section shall be ineligible to receive public funds, directly or indirectly, for five years from the date of the violation. Any such entity shall also be liable for any harm caused by its violation of this section. Any person aggrieved under this section may bring a civil action for declaratory or injunctive relief and may recover statutory damages of $5,000 per violation or actual damages, whichever is greater, and shall be entitled to attorneys’ fees and costs.