

# Children's Healthcare Is a Legal Duty, Inc.

136 Blue Heron Place, Lexington KY 40511  
Phone 859-255-2200  
Web page: www.childrenshealthcare.org

Number 3, 2015© by CHILD, Inc.  
E-mail: admin@childrenshealthcare.org  
Written by Rita Swan

*Equal rights for children under the law*



*Drs. Paul Offit and Richard Pan*

## CHILD honors Pan for vaccine leadership

On October 25 CHILD board member Dr. Paul Offit presented a plaque to California State Senator Richard Pan, M.D., for his leadership in repealing the state's belief exemptions from immunizations.

The plaque was presented at a breakfast for California physicians attending the American Academy of Pediatrics conference in Washington, D.C.

California is the first state in the nation to repeal a religious exemption from immunizations. It joins West Virginia and Mississippi as the only states to require immunizations without exception for religious and other personal beliefs.

On the plaque was a photo of Rhett Krawitt of Corte Madera testifying at the state capitol (see page 8). Rhett has had three years of chemotherapy for leukemia and is now in remission. During the Disneyland measles outbreak seven-year-old Rhett could not go to school because a large percentage of children at his Marin County school were unimmunized.

Vaccine opponents gathered petitions to place a measure on the ballot to restore belief exemptions and to force a recall vote on Senator Pan. They came nowhere close to gathering the required number of signatures for either petition.

---

## Abuse and neglect in Twelve Tribes

Twelve Tribes made the news in several countries in 2015. This end-times Christian religion was founded by Elbert Spriggs in Tennessee. It has spread to several states and countries. Members turn over all their assets to the sect and live communally with a goal of recreating the lifestyle of the early Christians. They generate income with delis, coffee houses, and other commercial enterprises.

Tribes children are generally taught by group members. They have to work in sect commercial enterprises. After eighth grade they labor fulltime. Fantasy and toys are prohibited as evil.

The faith aims to redeem society and prepare it for the return of Jesus or Yeshua by raising successive generations of ever-purer children. Communes are governed by older males designated as elders, who have authority to administer corporal punishment to all children and to separate wayward children from their biological parents and give them to others who will mold them properly.

Investigative journalist Julia Scheeres has a powerful and informative article about the sect in

### INSIDE

Internal Twelve Tribes teachings .....	4
Pennsylvania parents charged in fatal neglect .....	5
Abuses in Christian reform schools .....	6
Georgia parents charged in fatal neglect .....	7
AMA and AAFP oppose belief exemptions .....	8

“Children of the Tribes,” which appears in the September 1<sup>st</sup> issue of *Pacific Standard*.  
[http://childrenshealthcare.org/?page\\_id=149](http://childrenshealthcare.org/?page_id=149)

### **Medical and educational neglect in France**

In June French authorities raided two of their communes looking for evidence of child abuse, educational neglect, and labor violations. They also suspect the adults of benefit fraud, tax fraud, and money laundering. Four children were taken into temporary custody.

In 2002 nineteen Tribes members were sentenced for dereliction of parental duty, including educational neglect and refusing vaccinations. Homeschooling is legal in France but parents must register with local authorities and allow annual inspection of students and programs.

In 2001 a Twelve Tribes couple were convicted in France for failing to provide medical care and adequate nutrition to their 19-month-old son Raphael Ginhoux, who weighed only ten pounds at his death. The cause of death was a treatable heart defect and malnutrition.

### **Horrific abuses filmed in Germany**

A 2013 hidden camera investigation of Twelve Tribes has led to charges, convictions, and termination of parental rights in Germany with cases still in litigation. A Radio Television Luxembourg (RTL) journalist infiltrated the Twelve Tribes commune in Bavaria. With hidden cameras Wilfram Kuhnigk filmed fifty scenes of beating children that were shown on German television in 2013.

Over a few hours adults were filmed beating six children a total of 83 strokes with a willow cane on bare buttocks. Preschool children were ordered to touch the cellar floor with their hands. They were struck until they expressed the submission they were ordered to say. Sven, a boy who ran away at age fourteen, told the press he was beaten for imitating an airplane and wetting the bed.

Kuhnigk also got video of the children getting up at 5 a.m., standing through an hour-long prayer session, and then working all day in the fields.

Bavarian authorities had investigated the commune several times before upon reports of corporal punishment, which is illegal in Germany. They did not find enough evidence to file criminal charges.

After Kuhnigk’s filming was aired, Bavarian authorities raided two sect compounds and took

custody of 41 children. Most were eventually returned to their parents but six families permanently lost custody of their children.

In June a Nuremberg appellate court upheld the terminations in two cases. The court cited German law establishing “the right of every child to a fully non-violent upbringing.” The court pointed out that the parents insisted “punishment with the rod” had to continue as their religious practice. The court held that their children will be enduring physical pain and living in fear and that separating the children from their parents was, albeit drastic, the only way to protect them.

The state also requires the Tribes to send their children to a school with qualified teachers. Twelve Tribes originally had a state license to operate a private school but its license was later revoked because it did not have qualified teachers.

In November one Twelve Tribes elder was convicted for corporal punishment of a teenager, who testified against him. The elder was sentenced to six months’ probation and fined. Charges against others are pending.

### **Corporal punishment: two views**

Like a 1984 raid on Twelve Tribes in Vermont, the raids in Germany and France are controversial. The Forum for Religious Freedom in Europe argues that the children are harmed more by being taken away from their parents and community than by their experience in the sect. Stuart Wright and Susan Palmer attack such interventions in their new book *Storming Zion: Government Raids in Religious Communities*.

Twelve Tribes defends corporal punishment at length on its webpage, [www.twelvetribes.org](http://www.twelvetribes.org). They cite many Bible verses to justify their use of corporal punishment. They claim crime rates and other social ills would rise dramatically without corporal punishment. They also believe they must raise a generation of redeemed children in order for Jesus/Yeshua to return to earth. The Twelve Tribes parent hits his child with “love in his heart” and “brings [painful] consequences without injury.”

### **Child’s will must be subjugated**

Like childrearing-advice-givers James Dobson and Michael Pearl, Twelve Tribes is determined to crush rebellion. Without spanking, rebellion, frustration, and anger will take over. The parent must win; the child must be defeated, they say.

One hears anecdotes of Tribes children being struck intermittently for hours to compel them to express their subjugation, guilt, love of parent, etc.

In fairness, we've never heard of a child beaten to death or physically disabled by corporal punishment in Twelve Tribes. Investigations, however, have been thwarted by moving members to other states and informants recanting.

### **Dangers of faith-based corporal punishment**

Furthermore, we believe the potential for serious physical harm is great. The practice of hitting with implements rather than the hand increases the danger in that the adult does not feel the severity of the blows. The fierce religious justification for corporal punishment increases the danger. Elevating corporal punishment to a religious mandate necessary to a moral, law-abiding, prosperous society can prevent people from seeing any harm from their action.

Twelve Tribes members and the webpage emphasize that they don't hit the children in anger. However, getting hit by a poker-faced, emotionally-detached, robotic adult can be just as terrifying to a child as by an angry, yelling adult.

The webpage alone raises serious concerns in CHILD's view but what Tribes leaders say in their internal "teachings" for members is even more disturbing. See pages 4-5.

### **Does Tribes' theology oppose medical care?**

The Tribes webpage does not mention any doctrine against medical care. The New England Institute of Religious Research says, however, that founder Spriggs has "an overarching world view that the medical system is evil" and that seeking medical treatment "goes against the anointing." Furthermore, Spriggs in common with anti-medical sects has put out teachings claiming that disease is caused by sin and healed by prayer and ritual.

One teaching states that guilt and unconfessed sin cause a weak immune system. Confession and repentance are the proper way to prevent infectious disease.

Members have no possessions or income of their own. They have no health insurance. They have to get permission from elders to obtain medical treatment and some are castigated as weaklings for doing so.

### **Unvaccinated children stricken with pertussis**

Multiple sources say that several children are buried in unmarked graves in a remote, nameless cemetery used by the Vermont Twelve Tribes. *Newsweek* reported on three (Nov. 29, 1982). No criminal charges have been filed in any deaths of U.S. Tribes children.

The best documented death of a Vermont Tribes child was that of 15-month-old Ruth Whittenburg in 1989 when she and other unvaccinated Tribes' children contracted pertussis. Her father Bruce told Scheeres he consulted the elders, who told him, "If God wants her to live, He'll save her."

No charges were filed. Deputy Medical Examiner Paul Morrow even praised the church for its cooperation with his office. The baby "appeared to be well fed and cared for," Morrow said, adding there was no evidence she had been neglected or abused. (*St. Albans Daily Messenger*, Dec. 14, 1989)

### **God orders women to suffer in childbirth**

Several infants have died in unattended home deliveries of Twelve Tribes women including in Vermont, California, and Colorado. According to an ex-member, Spriggs has a "Second Covenant" teaching that women must endure pain in childbirth to be saved and they forfeit hope for salvation if they accept pain relief. He bases his teaching on the book of Genesis in which God tells Eve, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children," as He expels Adam and Eve from the garden.

Scheeres tells of a San Diego Tribes woman who was in labor for five days in 2005. The baby died in a breech birth.

An ex-member says there is a medical doctor who belongs to a Twelve Tribes group in Australia and was flown in to North Carolina to treat Elbert Spriggs in 2013.

### **Tribes' businesses: no salaries or income tax**

Twelve Tribes businesses grossed \$26 million in 2012. The members who work in them—often far more than 40 hours a week—get only food, clothing, and shelter for their labor. They do not pay into Social Security or Medicare. The businesses pay sales and property taxes but not income tax. The IRS recognizes them as a 501(d) organization, a designation given to religious or apostolic organizations with a common treasury. They are

allowed to operate businesses “for the benefit of their members.” Former members say large amounts of the income go to Hiddenite, North Carolina, where Spriggs and his wife live.

The businesses were charged with child labor violations in New York, causing Estee Lauder and Robert Redford to cancel contracts for their products.

More recently, the California Division of Labor Standards fined each of the Tribes’s three California businesses for failing to pay minimum wage and for not providing workers’ compensation. After a judge upheld the fines in 2012, the group reached a settlement with the state.

Sources include Oberlandesgericht Nurnberg Twelve Tribes ruling June 15, 2015; *The Independent* (U.K.), Sept. 10, 2013; *Boston Herald*, Sept. 5, 2001; New England Institute of Religious Research; and *Pacific Standard*, Sept. 1, 2015.

## Teachings of Twelve Tribes leaders

The New England Institute of Religious Research has shared with us many of the internal teachings of Twelve Tribes leaders for their members. Below are quotes excerpted from the teachings. The bold subheadings are ours; the grammar errors are theirs.

### **All willfulness of children is a sin against God and Twelve Tribes**

All rebellion against constituted authority is the sin of witchcraft or divination, for stubborn resistance or obstinacy to any commandment is the work of Satan in a person’s life in Israel. *Child Training II*

Parents who tolerate and defend prolonged rebellion in their children commit a grave sin against the body of Messiah on earth and the kingdom will be torn from them, as well as their children.

*Child Training II*

### **Elders make decisions about family governance to keep the community pure**

The parents take it to the elders, not just relying on a decision based on their own judgment to keep from polluting the nation. . . . The parents are to turn over judgment to the community and allow them to execute judgment. *Training Up Our Children in the Way They Should Go* 11/22/88.

Receiving a curse is being cut off from Israel or from the kingdom. Receiving a blessing is to be worthy of the kingdom. *Authority I* 9/18/90

The blessing or curse will come upon us. I do not want that my son would have to be excommunicated and me having to give an account of why I failed. *Authority V* 9/25/90

### **Corporal punishment of children is the only means of salvation**

The rod expiates - takes away the guilt from a child’s heart. Without it, guilt will remain and there will be no way they can be saved. *Authority I* 9/18/90

Except for death, the worst thing a person can experience is knowing that your child will experience eternal death because of your lack of love, care, discipline in training your child. *Authority I* 9/18/90

The rod has great power to keep our children from getting into great ungodliness (homosexuality, etc., insane asylum, jail). *Yoneq* 10/31/90

Train your child to submit to their discipline willingly. Tell them to bend over when they are being paddled. Make sure they bend over submissively, not wriggling around. . . or guilt will not be removed. . . . *Child Training* 3/20/91

The purpose of the mother is to take on the mind of the father and to support his authority. . . . The fallen motherly instinct which causes you to be overly protective or pamper your child will also cause you to receive Antichrist. *Letter from Abel* 4/6/85

### **Corporal punishment must chastise, scourge, and cause pain and “stripes”**

No other discipline will conquer except the rod. Any other approach that avoids physical pain is useless. *Child Training II*

The word chastise means to inflict suffering upon, with a view to amendment, corporal or bodily pain to bring to right standing; to use the rod to inflict pain sufficient to cause a child to correct his rebellion, or to restrain a child from willful harm due to disobedience. Let’s never use the rod unless it hurts. *Child Training B*

Scourge means to whip, as with a small, bendable rod. *Child Training II*

Our children need to fear the rod. The severity of our discipline should cause them to never want to

be disciplined again. . . . We have no other purpose than to deal with our children. So take action and “beat the tar out of him.” *Letter from Abel* 4/6/85

We know that the “stripes that wound” spoken of in Proverbs 20:30 is not constituted injury by the merciful loving God because it is under the control of a loving parent who is obeying the word of God. The stripes are the only way the heart can be reached. Injury is to impair soundness of health to wound. But stripes or marks from loving discipline shows love by the parents. *Authority V* 9/25/90

Bend his neck and bruise his ribs while he is young. Allow him no independence in childhood, or he will hurt you very deeply. *Letter from Abel* 4/6/85

Reproof gives wisdom to the child. Submission comes only through reverent submission (fear) of the Lord. Execute judgment and draw blood. *Elders Meeting* 2/11/78

### **Babies must be forced to obey**

A six-month-old baby can be trained what no means. Lightly use the rod not your hand. When the baby is wiggling when their diapers are changed, spank them to stop wiggling. *AWM* 3/16/88

Control begins when he is an infant, with swaddling clothes. *Child Training II*

[A former member said, “Babies are tightly swaddled up to three years old and not allowed to move their arms so as ‘to break their will but not their spirit.’” Another former member said that babies beyond a few months old are usually swaddled just for their naps.]

### **Corporal punishment protects people from disease**

Training our children we will receive either a blessing or a curse in this life and in the age to come. The Bible speaks of those who are cursed with illness, violent deaths, early death, and of those who are blessed with long life, who die at a natural time, who live long enough to see the fruit of their labor. The blessing or the curse will be upon both the parent or the child. *Authority I* 9/18/90

God has promised the blessing of peace, prosperity and long life to the child with no sick bed affliction, no violent deaths, no premature deaths due to disease, famine, wild beast or war. The promise that death would come just at the right time to the godly; they will see prosperity and will live long enough

on the land to see their children rise up and bless them. *Authority V* 9/25/90

Emotional and even physical problems will result if the mental conflict of guilt is allowed to continue in the child. Paul said that this is where illness comes from. *Guilt* 6/90

### **Disobedient children must be killed**

Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death. Even if he speaks an evil word against them or wishes evil on them, that is a curse and he forfeits his right to live on the earth. . . . To curse means to speak evil against. Even if no one heard you, God heard. Curse even means “does not bless.” If you do not bless your parents, you curse them. *Authority V* 9/25/90

## **Anti-medical parents charged in toddler’s death**

In June parents in Wyalusing, Pennsylvania, were charged with manslaughter and child endangerment in the death of their 18-month-old daughter, Hope.

The toddler was sick for three weeks with what began as an ear infection and became meningitis. She had a fever and sometimes vomited.

Her mother Christine Delozier said an abscess ruptured and fluid drained from the baby’s ear for five days.

The infection could have been treated with antibiotics and was also vaccine-preventable. But Delozier said she had done her “own research” and determined that vaccines were dangerous. She relied on herbal remedies to boost the baby’s immune system.

She later told police, “I watched her die.” When Hope stopped breathing, she tried to perform CPR for thirty minutes. After the father Ebed Delozier came home they took their baby to a hospital.

### **Poverty, religion, and trust in quackery**

Nurses quoted them as complaining about “holes” and “chemicals” being put in their baby and voicing opposition to modern medicine in general.

Hope was born at home without a midwife and had never been seen by a licensed provider before her death.

### **Former members of Twelve Tribes**

The family was living in a camper on the grounds of a Baptist church. They said they could not afford medical care but also cited religious beliefs as a factor in their decisions.

CHILD has been told that the Deloziers were members of Twelve Tribes when they lived in Vermont. That may have been why they were impoverished in Pennsylvania. Twelve Tribes members have to turn over all assets to the group and work fulltime without financial compensation. Tribes' teachings that disease is caused by sin and healed by ritual may have still influenced their decisions.

### **Virtually no investigation under old law**

We were pleased to learn that Children and Youth Services took strong action for the welfare of Hope's two surviving siblings. In 2009 toddler Kent Schaible died of pneumonia that went untreated because his parents belonged to the First Century Gospel Church in Philadelphia that opposes medical care. Social services oversight was woefully inadequate. It consisted only of checking the six siblings for signs of fever two days after their brother died.

The Department of Human Services report said they "researched [the Schaible's] church and found it to be a legitimate religion." DHS personnel "all agreed that DHS has to adhere to the rights of the family's religion. The case is based on religious reasons and the case was closed." In 2013 the Schaibles let a second child die of pneumonia without medical treatment.

### **Good investigation and oversight under new law**

In 2014 CHILD lobbied in Pennsylvania for repeal of the religious exemption to neglect. We were not successful but the legislature did amend the exemption so that it did not apply when a child died.

The contrast between social services' handling of the Schaible and Delozier families is striking. Bradford County Child and Youth Services reported that they got "complete physical examinations of [the Delozier] children by licensed medical providers. The safety plan developed with this family included assurances from the biological parents and the local minister assisting the family that any future medical needs for the surviving siblings of the Child/Victim would be attended to through conventional medical practices. The county agency has also maintained announced and unannounced

contact with this family to ensure that the overall health of siblings of Child/Victim is maintained. The family has been cooperative. . . ."

The Fatality Review team discussed how the parents' "religious beliefs contributed to this child's fatality" and recommended training for staff on "the interplay between personal religious beliefs and parental responsibilities to render essential medical care to their children." But the religious exemption did not restrict Child and Youth Services' interventions to protect Hope's siblings, and we are grateful for that 2014 amendment.

Sources include *Rocket-Courier*, June 11, 2015, and Bradford County Child and Youth Services Fatality Report on Hope Delozier.

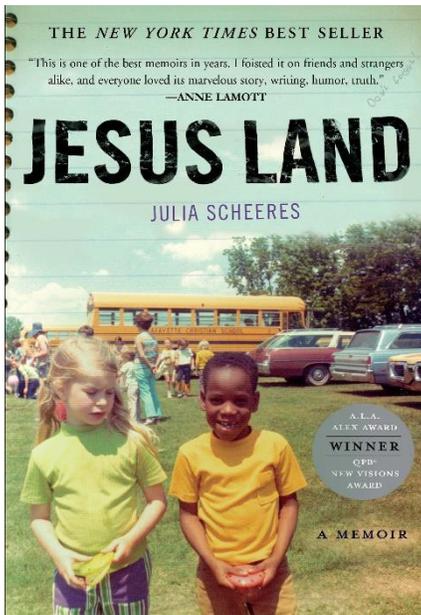
### **Power of a memoir**

Another powerful work by Julia Scheeres is her book *Jesus Land: A Memoir*. Like some other fundamentalists, her parents thought adopting children from another culture was God's will but could not relate to or bond with them. The Scheeres relegated their adopted African-American boys to rooms in the basement and directed most of the corporal punishment against them. Rural Indiana culture did not help either; Julia and her adopted African-American brother David were bullied and taunted with racial slurs in school and out.

### **Abuses in Dominican reform school**

When David and Julia rebelled they were sent to Escuela Caribe, a Christian boot camp in the Dominican Republic, owned by New Horizons Youth Ministries, which advertised that it would cure adolescents of rebellion and homosexuality. There, Scheeres writes, Rev. Gordon Blossom "threatened to strip me naked and beat me black and blue, which he claimed he'd already done to another girl who refused to obey her parents." Students had to do endless, meaningless work like moving rocks from one pile to another and back again. They were forced to make contrived confessions of sin and hit adults who then beat them up. Youths who earned enough points for good behavior advanced to controlling and meting out punishment to others.

The book is a heartbreaking account of David's hunger for a nurturing family, of Julia and David's love for each other, and of Julia's pain that she could not protect him from others' cruelty.



Escuela Caribe is the subject of the 2014 film *Kidnapped for Christ*. The school closed in 2011 after many reports of physical and emotional abuse. But its campus was taken over by Crosswinds, which also operates a residential boot camp for difficult teenagers and

hired several of Escuela Caribe employees.

### **Indiana revokes license after reading book and meeting with CHILD**

After Michigan revoked its license in 1974 because of abuse and neglect, New Horizons set up a “therapeutic” boarding school in Indiana two years later. In 2007 we sent a state official charged with monitoring such schools a copy of *Jesus Land* and later met with him about our concerns. The next year Indiana placed New Horizons on probation and in 2010 revoked its license in a thirty-page report documenting many of the same abuses that went on in the Dominican Republic a quarter century earlier.

Unfortunately, Indiana allows non-profit religious organizations to operate residential facilities for children without licensure. They cannot accept youths referred by state agencies, but the only state oversight is for fire prevention, sanitation, and safety standards. See Ind. Code 31-27-2-7.

After losing state licensure, New Horizons continued to operate an Indiana facility for awhile. Enrollment dwindled and its phone numbers have been disconnected. But their protean facilities like others in the troubled teen industry have several names and locations.

Sources include Theresa Rosado’s series on NHYM in *NOVO*, “To Hell and Back,” and Indiana Dept. of Children’s Services, Notice of Hearing Decision: NHYM CCI-27-155460933, February 17, 2010. See <http://childrenshealthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/INnewhorizonsruling2.pdf>

### **Georgia parents charged in faith death**

In April Herbert Landell and Lauren Fristed of Duluth, Georgia, were charged with murder, aggravated battery by depriving, and cruelty to children in the death of their ten-week-old daughter Neveah, whose name is “heaven” spelled backwards.

They allegedly diluted her milk with water, which caused her electrolyte and sodium levels to drop drastically and caused water intoxication that led to swelling of the brain. They told investigators they did not have enough money to pay for formula.

### **Religious beliefs against medical care**

Their religious beliefs against medicine also motivated them, however. Fristed had no pre- or post-natal care and even refused to take the pre-natal vitamins a friend bought for her. The couple had planned on a home delivery but went to a hospital for a last-minute Cesarean section.

There hospital providers were concerned that the father opposed newborn screenings and other medical care, telling them that “God promises everything will be okay.” Eventually the father consented but said the baby would not need a pediatrician after her release because he wanted to rely on faith.

The hospital called the Department of Children and Family Services to report suspected child neglect, but the intake worker screened it out. DCFS decided there was no immediate threat to the baby and closed the case without investigating.

### **Demon attack claimed; wife must obey husband**

Landell told a detective that a demon attacked Neveah a week before her death. He said a battle was waged between his prayers and the evil spirit.

The parents attend a church called Witness Ministries in Lawrenceville and had a “spiritual advisor” there.

Police say Fristed told the spiritual advisor she wanted to get formula and medical care for the baby, but also told the police her husband opposed them and the Bible required her to obey her husband. On the day of Neveah’s death she texted the spiritual advisor, “I wish [Landell] would let us go get her seen.” But when Landell found the baby grey and unresponsive, he told Fristed to leave the room because of her “negative energy” and prayed.

Later the parents took the baby to a hospital. Her body was cold and stiff. She had lost 20% of her birth weight.

After Neveah was declared dead, the mother was seen crying, but when a detective walked in to interview the parents, he found them both laughing.

Later neighbors told investigators they had seen her outside without adequate clothing and unclean and that she had a bad odor. The neighbors did not call DCFS about their observations.

A citizens' review panel said DCFS was correct to screen out the case but should have referred the family for services.

### Can social services protect kids from neglect?

This case illustrates the limits of social services in protecting children from neglect. In many states there must be an imminent and serious threat before child protection services intervenes. It is unreasonable to expect that neighbors are going to see a serious threat to a child at the exact time it becomes an imminent emergency.

As for referring the family for services, the father plainly told the hospital he didn't want any. A person with a religious conviction to reject medical care is unlikely to accept state services voluntarily.

Diluting formula can damage the developing brain. An Atlanta pediatrician said babies should not be given any water before they are six months old and only small amounts for the next six months.

Nevertheless, "formula stretching" is reportedly common in poor families. More than a quarter of families in poverty reported diluting formula or reducing feedings in a 2011 Cincinnati Children's Hospital study. This should not be happening in the richest society in human history.

Sources include *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Apr. 29-30 and May 12, 2015; KHOU, May 1, 2015; and KXIA, May 14, 2015.

---

## Medical organizations oppose belief exemptions from immunizations

In 2015 both the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Family Physicians adopted policies calling for repeal of non-medical exemptions from immunizations.



*Rhett Krawitt testifies against belief exemptions*

At the AMA's House of Delegates June meeting two AMA councils presented a report that tightened exemption policy but still allowed exemptions for "deeply held beliefs."

Given the Disneyland measles outbreak, that was not good enough. Physicians lined up nearly outside the door to call for policy opposing all non-medical exemptions.

### Deeply held beliefs not valid reason

With Dr. Pan's bill still in the California legislature (see page 1), Dr. Luther Cobb, California Medical Association President, warned, "If this were to pass unchanged, the headlines will be that the AMA disagrees with the California legislation."

Dr. Christie Morgan from Massachusetts said she'd recently treated a case of acute epiglottitis [which is vaccine-preventable] in the ER and didn't "ever want to see a case again."

"It's like a speed-limit," said Dr. Douglas Myers from Washington, "I'm not sure any of us want to have deeply held beliefs about speeding."

The report was modified to call for repeal of all non-medical exemptions from immunizations.

The AAFP adopted its policy in October. AAFP President Dr. Wanda Filer of York, Pennsylvania, said, "In the last few years, we've seen more and more people recklessly forgo vaccinations. Some people even refuse to vaccinate their children. In doing so, they put everyone around them at risk. Enough is enough. Science has settled this issue. Not only are vaccines safe, they save lives."

The AAFP policy says exemptions from vaccines should be allowed only for a documented allergy or medical contraindication.

Sources include

[www.medpagetoday.com/MeetingCoverage/AMA/52000](http://www.medpagetoday.com/MeetingCoverage/AMA/52000) and AMA and AAFP policy statements.