



Louisiana Governor Sued Over COVID Vax Requirement for Schools

Louisiana Democratic Governor John Bel Edwards has added COVID shots to the required list of school vaccinations, overturning a vote from a legislative committee last week to nix the recommendation of the Louisiana Department of Health. The state's attorney general, along with a Republican member of the state House, filed a lawsuit against the governor, arguing Edwards' actions violate the state's constitution.

In his December 14 [letter](#) to the House Committee on Health and Welfare, which voted against the measure in 13-2 vote when three Democrats and one Independent joined all nine Republicans, Edwards wrote that he is "allowing this rule to go into effect because it will save lives and will help Louisiana to emerge from this pandemic."

Edwards further called COVID vaccines "a historic success" and said that "only" 12 serious adverse reactions were associated with their use, while no one died.

"However, we know that there have been far too many of our friends and neighbors who have yet to be vaccinated. This includes school age children who do have a risk of serious illness and death," Edwards wrote, contradicting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s [data](#) showing children ages 0-17 represent a small fraction of all COVID cases, and less than one percent of all deaths. At the same time, it has been [shown](#) that zero *healthy* children have died of COVID.

Governor Edwards went on to slam "the misleading and conspiratorial rhetoric provided at the House Health and Welfare meeting last week," likely referring to the [testimony](#) of Children's Health Defense Chairman Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., in which he accused vaccine-maker Pfizer of skewing safety data during shortened clinical trials and said the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rushed to approve an experimental product. Kennedy also argued that the serious risks associated with vaccines far outweigh the benefits for children.

"This rule," wrote Edwards, "does not force 'experimental shots' on children." It only applies to "vaccines that have been fully approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the individual's age." At this point, the letter continues, the FDA has only fully approved Pfizer-BioNTech's shot for those 16 years old and above.

The rule would take effect for the 2022 school year, and parents will be able to opt their children out from COVID vaccinations by submitting "a written statement from a physician stating that such vaccination is contraindicated for medical reasons, or the individual or his parent or guardian submits a



AP Images
John Bel Edwards



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on December 17, 2021

written dissent,” per the governor.

While the rule will apply to those age of 16 and older for now, if/when the FDA expands the approval to a wider age range, Louisiana’s requirements could change, too.

House Health and Welfare Committee Chairman Larry Bagley, to whom the letter was addressed, [said](#) he wasn’t surprised, but he was “disappointed that the governor vetoed what was clearly the bipartisan will of our committee, which is charged with oversight of this issue.”

The day after the governor made the decision, Louisiana Attorney general Jeff Landry (R) and Representative Raymond Crews (R) filed a [lawsuit](#) against Edwards.

Per the lawsuit,

The only thing standing in the way of this overreach is the very document that protects Louisianans from the unbounded exercise of executive authority: the Louisiana Constitution. The Louisiana Constitution grants the Governor the power only to *enforce* the law, not to make it.

The governor’s office defended its decision on Thursday, [claiming](#) that the the department of health and the governor acted “well within [their] legal authority.”

Local media [reports](#) that Landry is one of the GOP attorneys general who is currently challenging the Biden administration vaccine mandates for healthcare workers affiliated with Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for federal [contractors](#). Landry is also pushing back against the [mask mandates](#) in schools.

Landry’s argues that citizens should be able to freely decide on their healthcare choices, but the governor believes that such an approach is “completely wrong,” “irresponsible,” and “dangerous” in the context of an ongoing pandemic.

While the legal dispute over the matter has only just begun in the Pelican State, New Orleans, its largest municipality, is moving forward with the vaccine mandates for children.

On Thursday, New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell [expanded](#) an indoor vaccine or negative test requirement to children ages five to 11, while the New Orleans public school system mandated vaccination for students age five and older.

The indoor mandate will go into effect on January 3, when children will be required to show proof of at least one vaccine dose. On February 1, children will have to be double-jabbed.

The school vaccination requirement for children as young as five, first of its kind in the nation to affect that age group, goes into effect February 1.

The Los Angeles Unified School District became the first to require all students age 12 and older to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 10, 2022, unless they have a medical or other legal exemption. California Governor Gavin Newsom [announced](#) in October that all K-12 students in the Golden State must get their COVID shots once the FDA gives full approval of the vaccine for their age groups.



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