



Written by [James Murphy](#) on April 14, 2021

New Kentucky Law Protects the Right of Citizens to Refuse Vaccinations

People who might object to receiving vaccinations will still be allowed to opt out of them in the State of Kentucky — even during a pandemic — under the terms of a new law passed by the state’s legislature. [Senate Bill 8](#), created and sponsored by Senator Mike Wilson (R-Bowling Green), passed with bi-partisan support and without the signature of Democrat Governor Andy Beshear.

In Kentucky, a bill can become law without the governor’s signature providing there is a veto-proof majority of the final draft of the bill in both the House and the Senate. In the Senate, the bill passed by a 33-1 vote and in the House it passed by a 77-20 vote.



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While Kentucky — and no other state, as of this writing — has not yet mandated the COVID-19 or any other vaccine, a pre-existing section of the law would have allowed such a mandate. Senate Bill 8, however, codifies the right to refuse a vaccination “based on religious grounds or conscientiously held beliefs” or if a physician deems it unsafe to a person’s health.

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“All we did was [change] a little section, where it states that if indeed, there’s an epidemic or pandemic ... the cabinet, or actually the executive could mandate that everyone in the affected area must take the vaccine,” Wilson said. “But there are no opt-outs on that. And that’s what alarmed people.”

Wilson, it should be noted, is not an anti-vaxxer and has already received his full two-dose COVID-19 vaccination. But the senator strongly felt that his constituents should be able to opt out should they not wish to receive a shot.

“I was offered the vaccine when we started going into the session, and you know, I felt really strongly that if I got COVID, and that would be ... 10 to 14 days I wouldn’t be up there in session ... representing people in Warren County,” Wilson said. “So, I went ahead and took it.”

The bill does not apply to any private business that might require a vaccination for employees to work there.

It’s not all good news for freedom in the Blue Grass State, however, as Franklin Circuit Judge Phillip Shepherd recently blocked implementation of [Senate Bill 1](#), which would limit the emergency powers of Democrat Governor Andy Beshear. This means that, for the time being, other measures instituted by Beshear, such as the state mask mandate, will remain in effect.



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