

Rep. Brostoff: Statement on Assembly Bill 309

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MILWAUKEE – In response to a number of recent contacts on Assembly Bill (AB) 309, a bill that would make vaccination status a protected class and severely undercut established public health protocols and standards, Rep. Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

“It’s time to speak the truth. Vaccines save lives. Proponents of AB 309 claim that the bill is necessary to protect those who willingly choose to remain unvaccinated against common diseases from new ‘discrimination’ based on their choices. But the truth is that we Americans have been ‘discriminating’ on the basis of vaccination status since the 1850s, when the first vaccine requirement, against smallpox, was enacted in Massachusetts schools.

As science and medicine advanced, vaccination against diseases which had until then brought misery and death to humanity for centuries became an essential element of our national progress, a hallmark of civilization. By 1977, our federal government enacted a national school vaccine requirement, which was adopted by all 50 states, protecting against seven highly contagious childhood diseases – diphtheria, measles, mumps, pertussis, poliomyelitis, rubella, and tetanus – cases of which have since plummeted and have now been nearly eliminated as health concerns. Likewise, businesses and organizations have increasingly utilized vaccination requirements to protect their employees and the customers or members they serve, thereby significantly reducing the horrific physical, emotional, and devastating economic tolls of easily-preventable diseases.

This legislation is a misguided attempt to undermine some 170 years of our collective national efforts in the pursuit of improved public health and advancing freedom from needless suffering and death for the American people. It manipulates

legitimate anxiety and fear over a two-year-old pandemic and our imperfect but sincere efforts to persevere in order to enable and empower cowards and opportunists who lie to and radicalize our friends and neighbors, inflame and exploit our legitimate and heartfelt disagreements, and ultimately fuel their political and personal fortunes with American bodies.

The America I was brought up in, the patriots I was educated to revere as heroes, were sanctified through self-sacrifice to defend our most vulnerable – our children, our infirm, our seniors. This legislation represents a retreat of American greatness; our abandonment of personal responsibility and civic duty; and our submission to fear and hatred and to the thugs who wield them, who nibble and claw and hammer away at the foundations of the greatest experiment in human liberty and conscience and who would say and do anything for their own vanity and power. It's time to speak the truth.”