

**Emergency Powers Legislation MUST protect civil liberties while protecting public safety.**

[SB633](#), the Public Health Emergency Act, sponsored by Senator Jay Costa (D), fails to do this.

[SB633](#) grants the state unprecedented and sweeping powers if a state public health emergency is declared with NO preservation of the civil rights of individuals.

[SB633](#) enables suspension of current regulations, and for new ones to be promulgated without public input. Health officials and public health workers are granted complete immunity to “**administer, ...prophylaxis or treatment for a reportable disease or condition as necessary to prevent and control the spread of disease or condition.**”

**Pennsylvania currently has 74 “[reportable diseases](#),”<sup>1</sup>** with some being generally benign. This bill has **NO restrictions on the “as necessary”** provision. Without safeguards, there is **nothing** to prevent the state from vaccinating without consent or forcing interment in mass quarantine centers.

Extremely troubling findings<sup>2</sup> during animal testing halted previous attempts to develop a vaccine for other dangerous coronaviruses (SARS<sup>3</sup> and MERS<sup>4</sup>). Problems included liver and lung reactions and, astonishingly, *increased* susceptibility to the virus.

Regardless of the seriousness of COVID-19, or any other future outbreak, the limitations of science and medicine mean that the state cannot and should not supersede bodily autonomy.

**Self-quarantine or isolation must always be an option to any vaccination program.**

### **Balance Public Health Concerns with Protecting Bodily Autonomy**

Legislation should provide clear directions and protect the rights of citizens. The [Connecticut Public Health Emergency Response Act<sup>5</sup>](#) is a comprehensive law that balances public health concerns while protecting civil liberties. **Any emergency response legislation must:**

- Provide detailed direction regarding quarantine, including that “quarantine and isolation shall be by the **least restrictive means necessary** to prevent the spread of a communicable disease...” (Sec. 19a-131b)
- Require that residents be informed of **option to refuse vaccination** or medication for any reason. Require parental consent for any treatment or isolation for minors under 18 years.
- Ensure quarantine or isolation as an alternative to vaccination orders. (Sec. 19a-1312e)
- Restrict use of emergency power to address only public health threats that carry clear imminent risk of statistically significant mortality or long-term disability. (Sec. 19a-131)
- Define reasonable actions in case of outbreaks and quarantines.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Reporting-Registries/Pages/Reportable-Diseases.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4550498/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22536382/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27269431>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/pub/chap\\_368a.htm#sec\\_19a-131](https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/pub/chap_368a.htm#sec_19a-131)