

STATE SENATOR KATHY BERNIER
TWENTY-THIRD SENATE DISTRICT



State Capitol • P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707
Office: (608) 266-7511 • Toll Free: (888) 437-9436
Sen.Bernier@legis.wi.gov • www.SenatorBernier.com

From: Senator Kathy Bernier
To: The Senate Committee on Government Operations, Legal Review and Consumer Protection
Re: Testimony on Senate Bill 150
Relating to: immunization-related mail
Date: June 29, 2021

Thank you Chairman Stroebel and committee members for allowing me to provide testimony on Senate Bill 150 today.

I will keep my comments brief, as this is a simple bill.

A person's health information should be kept private. It is improper and imprudent for any person or group to disclose information about the health status of someone who has not consented to share it. This is especially true of the government.

This extends to information that could be used to reasonably infer a person's health information. Imagine you receive a postcard or a flyer, open to the public, that discusses your need for a specific prescription, or an appointment with a specialist. These types of postcards exist for vaccine status.

This bill does not pass judgment one way or another on vaccines. This bill simply secures, and affirms that the government has no right to intrude upon, your privacy and the privacy of every person across the state. It is their right, and yours as well, to have your medical information remain between you and your health care provider.



SHAE SORTWELL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Hearing Testimony

Senate Committee on Government Operations, Legal Review and Consumer Protection

June 29, 2021

AB 132/SB 150

Senator Stroebel and members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Legal Review and Consumer Protection – thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on SB 150, relating to immunization-related mail.

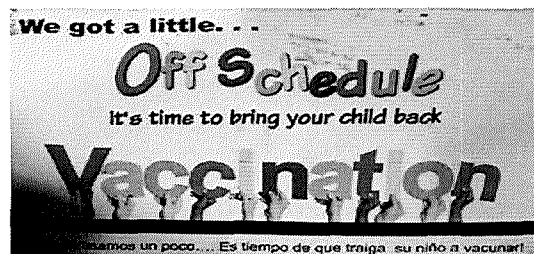
Health-related communications should be private. Unfortunately, some parents in Wisconsin have received postcard-type mailers that may reveal a child's immunization records or status.

The mailers differ in presentation, and often come from a county health department. The message is the same – they typically imply, in large font and on the outside of the postcard, in full view, that a child may be behind or may not be up to date on their vaccine schedule.

These mailers appear to subvert the intent of HIPAA protections by being suggestive to update someone's health records, rather than making a declarative statement. This behavior by any governmental body is unacceptable.

SB 150 would protect health privacy by requiring that any piece of mail containing immunization information is enclosed and sealed, and that no immunization information is visible on the outside of the mailer.

Here is an example of the type of mailers in question:



This bill passed the Assembly with bipartisan support (8 Democrats) and has been praised by Senator Taylor. I ask for your support, as well.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this bill and would gladly answer any questions the committee may have.