

Religion complicates Calif. vaccine debate

By Jeremy B. White, Sacramento Bee

Nick Johansen arrived at a Capitol hearing on vaccinations last week carrying a Bible.

Johansen, who said he hasn't yet decided whether to vaccinate his 10-month-old daughter Savannah, argued government shouldn't impose a reverence for science over his faith in God.

Senate Bill 277, a bitterly contested California bill eliminating the state's personal belief exemption for vaccines, doesn't apply just to parents who believe they are dangerous. It also would eliminate parents' ability to skip vaccinations for religious reasons.

In what Johansen described as an affirmation of his faith, his daughter has overcome severe medical issues. He considers her survival miraculous and warned SB 277 would harm devout Californians like him.

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