

Substitute for SB29

Chairman Carpenter and Members of the Committee,

Substitute for SB 29 makes an important change by ensuring that public health decisions are grounded in education and recommendations rather than broad mandates imposed by unelected officials.

Under current law, county and joint boards of health, as well as local health officers, have the authority to prohibit public gatherings when they deem it necessary for controlling infectious or contagious diseases. SB29 modifies this language to instead allow these officials to recommend against public gatherings, shifting the focus toward informing the public rather than compelling action.

Public health officials play a critical role in responding to health concerns, but their role should be to provide accurate information, guidance, and resources—not to impose restrictions that can have unintended consequences on individuals, businesses, and communities. Education and personal responsibility are the most effective tools for promoting public health while still respecting individual rights and decision-making.

While I would have preferred the bill as it was originally introduced, at times, we have to take what we can get. This version still represents a step in the right direction by limiting government overreach and emphasizing personal choice in public health matters. I urge the committee to support this bill and restore a balanced approach to public health policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Kari Sue  
Vosburgh