



# The Knesset

[Home](#) [Members of Knesset](#) [Parliamentary Business](#) [About the](#)

[Knesset - Home](#) » [What's On](#) » [Knesset News](#) » [Knesset passes bill allowing disclosure of information on non-vaccinated citizens to local authorities](#)



## Knesset News

February 24, 2021

### **Knesset passes bill allowing disclosure of information on non-vaccinated citizens to local authorities**

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The Knesset plenum on Wednesday passed into law the Bill to Amend the Public Health Ordinance (Temporary Order – Novel Coronavirus) (Disclosing Information on Inoculated Individuals), 2021. Under the legislation, approved as a temporary order for three months or until the COVID-19-related state of emergency ends, the Health Ministry will be authorized to disclose information on people who have yet to be vaccinated to local Authorities, to the director general of the Ministry of Education and to elements within the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services that operate treatment centers, with the purpose of allowing these bodies to encourage people to get vaccinated.

The information will be transferred to local authorities subject to an active request and the presentation of a vaccination plan. A body that receives the authorization of the director general of the Ministry of Health will be given the names, ID numbers, addresses and phone numbers of citizens who can get inoculated but have yet to do so. As for citizens who were given the first dose of the corona vaccine but missed their appointment to receive the second jab, the bodies will receive the date on which the first dose was administered.

To limit the invasion of privacy and to prevent the misuse of the information, the law states that the information will be used solely for the purpose of encouraging people to get vaccinated. The information will be expunged after it is used and no later than 60 days

get vaccinated. The information will be expunged after it is used and no later than 60 days after it is received.

MK Haim Katz (Likud), chair of the Labor, Welfare and Health Committee, presented the bill. "The pandemic does not operate according to logic. It strikes wherever it can. Initially it struck adults, and now [it is striking] young people," he said. "The stores are closed and the economy has been hurt – here and all over the world. We, those elected by the people to try to improve their quality of life, must reach decisions. Unfortunately, until now the government has not taken severe measures, and this is why we have 5,605 dead. Had we behaved differently, we would not have reached these numbers. The vaccinations are a must, and this law is meant to increase the number of inoculations among those who are under the impression that they do not need to get vaccinated."

"I have been asked, 'what about privacy?' Is the value of privacy more important than the value of life? In the committee we removed from the bill the transfer of information on children and people who have received two vaccine doses. The information will pertain only to people who can get vaccinated but have yet to do so. Nothing beyond that. All the data will be destroyed two months after the transfer [of information]. No one has the right to endanger the life of someone else because he wants to go to a party or demonstrate. The sanctity of life is above all else."

MK Tamar Zandberg (Meretz) said, "I call on the public to get vaccinated, and there is no doubt that encouraging vaccinations is currently the most important operation in the State of Israel. It is the *derech hamelech* (king's path) for exiting the pandemic. However, we are too easy on the trigger when it comes to passing laws that include harm to the privacy of citizens, in this case the transfer of personal and sensitive medical information before all the other possibilities have been exhausted. I haven't seen campaigns of information and encouragement to get vaccinated, or the dissemination of information that empowers and strengthens the public. Transferring such information is a slippery slope, and it may reach many interested elements. There is a risk of harming the public's trust."

The bill passed its third and final reading by a vote of 30 to 13.



[Previous](#)