

To whom it may concern;

I am unable to testify in person, since I am scheduled for jury duty at Superior Court on March 8, 2013.

I am testifying in support of HB 6158.

My name is Kevin Benson. I am a pediatrician in a group practice in Shelton Connecticut. I moved from New York in 2001 in order to seek brighter prospects in the Constitution State, Connecticut.

The current Connecticut State Vaccine program reminds me of a story my father, a retired police officer, told me. Early in his career as a police officer, my father walked a foot post in Farmingdale, New York. He befriended many of the local business owners as he made his rounds checking for trouble. One especially close relationship was developed with a pizza shop owner named, perhaps stereotypically, Tony. Tony made excellent New York style pizza and purchased the best ingredients he could, making his own sauce and mixing his own dough every day. One day Tony was visited by an individual who informed him that he would now be buying his mozzarella from someone else. Tony was shocked; he was very satisfied with the cheese vendor he had used for years, receiving a product of excellent quality and price. The person then took note of the windows to the pizza shop. He said to Tony, "Those are nice windows you have there. I bet they would be expensive to replace".

Tony began buying his mozzarella from the new vendor.

We doctors have been hearing about the a shift to the State vaccine program for years now. At first we were informed by a number of insurance companies that they would no longer be reimbursing doctors for private vaccines and that patients covered by those insurances would have to take advantage of the "free" Connecticut State Vaccine program. That would shift the cost of providing vaccines from the insurance that employees directly pay for to the State, which every taxpayer pays for. This would have also cut into the small amount of profit that we providers make for administering vaccines; profit which goes to paying for supplies, paying for staff, and keeping our lights on and our doors open.

This move was resisted by physicians. The insurance companies reluctantly were forced to again cover private vaccines for the employees and their families.

In 2012 we were informed that this shift to use only state vaccines was being considered again. But this time, the move was coming from the State legislature itself. For reasons I can only speculate upon, the already overburdened State was considering requiring ALL patients to receive vaccines provided by the state ONLY.

Just as we were mounting resistance to this program, it was passed.

The doctors were not given a voice in this decision.

I was informed that if I did not comply with this program, that "there would be consequences" including **losing my medical license.**

It appears to me that Tony's acquaintance in the cheese business might have taken up residence in the Constitution State.

Karen L. Laugel, M.D. • Melaine J. Georgalas, M.D. • Nicholas P. Mongallo, M.D.  
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My office currently participates with the new program, as I was overruled by my partners, who like Tony, see doing some business better than doing no business. Our already slim profit margin has to be further whittled down to provide for our office needs and our staff. And unlike the past, if we found a vaccine at a better price, we cannot switch vendors. Our vendor is now Connecticut State. The added financial burden of these vaccines must be borne by all taxpayers, not the insurers. I'm sure the insurance rates of those employees paying for insurance will not decrease.

Medicine is philanthropy.

Medicine is a business.

Both of those things must be considered. People in the medical field are moved to care for others. But they cannot do so without providing for equipment, supplies and salaries so those people in medicine can both live and perform their duties. If the pizza restaurants of our state were told that they could only get their cheese from the government, there would be an uproar. Physicians, however, are supposed to be of a different breed, thinking of others before themselves. So we hear nothing. But to quote Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."

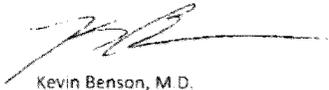
I, for one, believe in the principles that this country was founded on. I believe that the Constitution exists to limit the ever expanding reach of government into our lives, both in business and our personal lives. I believe that capitalism in the United States has not only lifted countless millions out of poverty, but created a competitive medical system which none of the socialized medical systems on the planet can compete with.

Should Connecticut State continue on this path, I will have no choice but to take my business elsewhere. Connecticut will have one less medical professional. Connecticut will have one less citizen to tax. And I will not be alone.

Every journey begins with a step; when will the State be running your business?

Please reconsider this limit on my freedom as a business owner, a doctor, and a citizen and approve HB 6158.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin Benson, M.D.