

6949

Committee on PUBLIC HEALTH

Testimony Against Raised H.B. No. 6949 AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS

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Senator Terry Gerratana, Representative Matt Ritter and members of Public Health Committee. My name is Jennifer Masi, parent and Connecticut resident, and I am writing testimony against HB 6949 as it is a violation of our First Amendment right to free exercise of our religious beliefs. Parents should not be required to sign an incriminating statement in order to claim their legal right to a religious exemption. **Please vote against this bill.** To be clear, Connecticut allows for religious exemption. Connecticut should not create substantive requirements for a parent/guardians to exercise their religious beliefs when taking religious exemption to vaccination.

Furthermore, this bill would require a doctor to provide vaccine education to parents who claim religious exemption. Nothing a doctor says will change one's religious beliefs: doctors have nothing to do with religious beliefs.

Parental informed consent is the standard in developed democracies around the world. There is no such thing as a mandated vaccine in Canada, the UK, Japan, Ireland, Australia, Germany, France, Denmark, Israel, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, etc. Nineteen states allow exemptions for any reason including California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, Michigan and more than a dozen other where more than half of America's population lives. Twenty-eight states, currently including Connecticut, allow a religious exemption upon presenting a form stating a religious reason not to vaccinate.

Connecticut religious exemption laws aren't broken, please protect our First Amendment right of freedom to religion and do not support HB 6949.