

Committee on PUBLIC HEALTH
Testimony Against Raised H.B. No. 6949 AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDHOOD
VACCINATIONS

By Julianne Skoczylas
Trumbull, CT
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Senator Terry Gerratana, Representative Matt Ritter and members of Public Health Committee. My name is Julianne Skoczylas. I am a concerned parent and Connecticut resident and I am writing testimony against HB 6949.

I oppose bill HB 6949 because it violates parents' and guardians' First Amendment rights to free exercise of their religious beliefs. Parents should not be required to sign and notarize a document saying that they understand the medical risks as dictated by the Department of Health. What does their understanding of the perceived risk information have to do with their religious beliefs? Parents should not be required to sign such a statement in order to claim their legal right to a religious exemption.

We have freedom of religion in this country and the freedom of choice as to how we practice our religion. This bill is a step in the wrong direction towards chipping away at that freedom of choice. This nation was founded on the principles of individual freedom and liberty, and the Bill of Rights were adopted as amendments to the U.S. Constitution to ensure that government never overreached and trampled upon the rights of an individual.

That protection is in jeopardy and will violate Connecticut's Constitutional rights as set forth in Article I, Section 3, which states: "Freedom of religious opinion. No law shall in any case whatever control the free exercise, and enjoyment of religious [sic] opinions, or interfere with the rights of conscience." No citizen should have to prove or fight for their rights to exercise their beliefs.

If government in America is allowed to force its fellow citizens to risk injury or death without their voluntary, informed consent, then we are no longer free Americans. Our bodies are then owned by the state and can be sacrificed by the will of the state.

Proposed H.B. 6949 clearly interferes and burdens the rights of conscience and will violate the Constitution if passed. As citizens, we must demand accountability of our government and demand our government protect our rights, not disregard them. If H.B. 6949 becomes law, then the promises of freedom and liberty that this nation were founded upon are nothing but a sham for then our bodies, ourselves, our souls, are truly owned by the state.

Please vote against this bill.

Thank you for your time, consideration and service,
Julianne Skoczylas