

Testimony of Marti Stewart, RN
Candidate for UHP 3837 Vice President Tier II
In Opposition to HB 5448
An Act Requiring Health Care Providers to be Vaccinated Against Influenza
Public Health Committee Hearing
March 4, 2015

Good afternoon, my name is Marti Stewart and I have been registered nurse at UCONN Health since 1986. I am asking you to oppose HB 5448. I have several reasons for this. The first is that studies have shown that the effectiveness of the flu vaccine is a dismal 56% at best. Secondly research also shows that vaccination of healthcare workers for flu has no effect on outcomes of elderly patients. I also feel that the potential serious side effects of the vaccine are not made transparent to the general public. In fact, the CDC vaccination fact sheet does not clearly note Guillain-Barre as a possible adverse reaction to the influenza immunization, yet it is well know that this paralyzing neurological disease can and does occur. One should not be forced to accept possible paralysis as a condition of employment.

As one would expect, a nurse cares for many and sees much. This experience along with my family history of metastatic breast cancer has dictated my lifestyle. I exercise daily, eat organic fruits and vegetables, and choose free range antibiotic-free meat and eggs. I also choose to avoid exposure to various agents such as fluoride and chlorine in drinking water, aluminum in deodorants and cooking utensils, etc. There are many others who share these beliefs. Our numbers are growing and we are intelligent and informed; one visit to the busy Whole Foods Market validates this statement. Those of us who choose to live a healthy lifestyle and avoid additives and chemicals deserve the right to claim a personal belief exemption to the vaccination without being fired, or having to wear a "scarlet letter" while working.

Thank you for your time and consideration.