

I am opposed to HB 6949 as both a parent and a registered nurse. I cannot believe that some of our state representatives are ready to trample on our constitutionally provided religious freedom. It is even more ludicrous given the fact that 98.5% of school children in Connecticut are in full compliance with state vaccination guidelines. How do the religious beliefs of a miniscule minority of children threaten our states public health to the degree that we need to be stripped of our religious freedom?

As a nurse I am bound to the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics, which states in provision 1: "The nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems." By impinging on religious freedom, this bill will NOT support the inherent human dignity, uniqueness or personal attributes of the patients I care for.

Provision 4 states : "The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient." This bill will violate religious freedom and patient rights.

Nurses are strong supporters of patient autonomy and the right to refuse care based upon one's religious beliefs. A common example would be followers of the Jehovah's Witnesses who refuse blood products. We nurses and other healthcare professionals still provide the best care possible while respecting the religious beliefs of the patients we care for. Please do not force a medical procedure and pharmaceutical products on Connecticut citizens who are religiously opposed.

Sincerely,
Kristen Festa, RN, BSN