

6949

Mar 19 at 11:29 PM  
Lisa Cummings  
Westport, CT 06611  
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Senator Terry Gerratana, Representative Matt Ritter and members of Public Health Committee. My name is Lisa Cummings, I am a parent and a Certified Nutrition and Health Coach with the AADP (American Association of Drugless Practitioners) and I am writing to urge you to NOT SUPPORT HB 6949. This bill will require parents or guardians who, due to religious beliefs, object to vaccination and therefore must submit a notarized statement they "have reviewed and understand information regarding risks of both immunization and failure to immunize." To be clear Connecticut allows for religious exemption. Connecticut should not create substantive requirements for a parent/guardian to exercise their religious beliefs when taking exemption to vaccination.

Connecticut has one of the highest vaccination rates of any state. And no one has even attempted to make a case that religious exemptions are resulting in increased levels of disease. This bill is an added expense to all involved and violates First Amendment religious rights.

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.

Here is another testimony written as example:

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

By Ariana Rawls Fine  
Stratford, CT  
Submitted March 20, 2015

Senator Terry Gerratana, Representative Matt Ritter and members of Public Health Committee. My name is Ariana Rawls Fine. I am a concerned parent and Connecticut resident and I am writing testimony against HB 6949.

I oppose this proposed bill because it violates parents and guardians' First Amendment rights to free exercise of their religious beliefs. Parents should not be required to sign an incriminating statement in order to claim their legal right to a religious exemption. There is the added layer that they are being asked 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?

The questions also arise as to what purpose the notarized statement may be used in the future and whether it will be used against parents during legal proceedings with DCF, custody battles and other unforeseen situations. What will be done with these notarized statements? Who will have access to them? Will they be public? What is the real purpose behind this proposed bill?

We have freedom of religion in this country and the freedom of choice as to how we practice our religion. If we start chipping away selectively at that freedom of choice for the perceived "greater good" of society, are we not inching towards a more communist way of thinking when it suits us?

**Please vote against this bill.**

**Thank you for your time, consideration and service,**

Other talking points:

Reading the Ct. State Constitution section 3 it is important that we emphasize that there is no public health threat posed by the small percentage of religious exemptions and that herd immunity rates have been met, maintained and exceeded.

Here is the wording of the Ct. State Constitution on religious freedom...

SEC. 3. The exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination, shall forever be free to all persons in the state; provided, that the right hereby declared and established, shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or to justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of the state.

It seems that Ritter is probably using as his rationale the last justification for forcing a notarization of belief. So in essence we do have to prove that there is no Threat to safety. The only way I know how to do that is to point out that Herd immunity levels have been met, maintained and exceeded.