

6949

Stephen Serkosky

Farmington, CT

Submitted March 22nd, 2015

Senator Terry Gerratana, Representative Matt Ritter and members of Public Health Committee. My name is Stephen Serkosky and I am a parent of two girls ages 11 and 13. 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 have to meet conditions in order to claim their legal rights. Please vote against this bill. The state of Connecticut allows for religious exemption. Connecticut should not create requirements for a parent to exercise their religious beliefs when taking religious exemption to vaccination.

This bill would require a doctor to provide education to parents who claim religious exemption. Doctors have nothing to do with religious beliefs. Parents will not only be forced to sign and notarize a statement that they understand the materials presented to them but also that they understand they are putting their child and others at risk. This is extremely incriminatory and could put parents at risk of investigation by the state. Parents might not hold this declaration to be true because of their religious beliefs and therefore signing it would undermine their religious beliefs. However if the parent doesn't sign the statement required by bill 6949 then they cannot claim religious exemption. This is a definite infringement on the First Amendment Right of freedom of religion.

Connecticut has a 98.53% vaccination rate, which is very high, even with the increase in the rate of religious exemptions. So, there really is no compelling reason to override a religious exemption to vaccines.

There are now over 60 vaccinations from birth to 18 on the schedule. That number has increased exponentially over the past ten years, yet at the same time exemption rights have decreased. I am opposed to HB 6949.