

To Members of the Children's Committee:

My name is Kevin Barry. I am the President of a non-profit called First Freedoms. Our mission is to protect the freedoms listed in the First Amendment. I am also the author of a book entitled VACCINE WHISTLEBLOWER: EXPOSING AUTISM RESEARCH FRAUD AT THE CDC.

Please oppose HB-7005 in its current form, and please oppose it when/if the language changes to make the bill a direct attack to remove the entire existing religious exemption.

Parents who have religious objections to vaccination have valid concerns about legislative creep. Before SB277 removed religious freedom in California in 2015, California passed a bill to weaken the religious exemption in 2013. Just last week in New Jersey, a bill which passed out of the Assembly committee in 2018 restricting the religious exemption was amended to totally remove the exemption. There is currently a bill in New York to totally remove the religious exemption to vaccination. It stands to reason that the pharmaceutical lobby will try to capture all three markets in the tri-state area during this legislative session: 3.5 million people in CT, 20 million people in New York, and 9 million people in New Jersey. An existing religious freedom is in jeopardy for more than 32 million people in the tri-state area.

As legislators, you frequently have to balance competing interests. With HB-7005, there are competing interests. According to representative Linehan, she is concerned about the burden of a school nurse to look at the identification of a parent to acknowledge the identity of the parent submitting the religious exemption. Quite a burden.

On the other side of the scale is freedom of religion, the first freedom listed in the First Amendment. Freedom of religion - the first thing mentioned as a right in the Bill of Rights. Freedom of religion - one of the primary motivators for the founders of this country to sail across the Atlantic.

So it's school nurses having to look at driver's license vs. the first freedom named in the Bill of Rights.

Thomas Jefferson must be rolling in his grave that states are considering surrendering freedom of religion to corporate interests in this way, while hiding behind a school nurse.

Jefferson wrote his own tombstone. On it he listed three accomplishments:

1. Author of the Declaration of Independence
2. Author of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and
3. Father of the University of Virginia.

The Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom is the basis for the First Amendment. Jefferson was right that establishing religious freedom in this country was more important than minor accomplishments, like being a two-term President, a Vice President and a Secretary of State.

There is no problem at all with the current religious exemption in Connecticut which needs solving. Please leave it as is.

Please vote against HB-7005 and all of its progeny. Please protect the religious freedom of your citizens. Please give the Bill of Rights the respect it deserves. Please help Thomas Jefferson Rest in Peace.

Kevin Barry
President
www.firstfreedom.org

kidtestimony@cga.ct.gov