

Dear Committee members,

I would appreciate your consideration of my opposition to HB7005, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PARENTAL STATEMENTS CONCERNING RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS TO VACCINATION BY SCHOOL NURSES AND PERMITTING MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY TO ACKNOWLEDGE SUCH STATEMENTS.

Requiring that a religious exemption be acknowledged by a list of government approved people infringes on religious freedom. Removing school nurses from this list imposes further restrictions making it more challenging for people to exercise their religious beliefs.

Requiring an acknowledgement of a religious belief implies that the person wishing to exercise their right to religious freedom requires governmental permission to do so. It is a private decision between a person and God. People should not be required to obtain a signed permission slip and submit it to a government entity in order to uphold their deeply held covenant with God. Adding clergy to the list, and specifying which clergy are eligible, would suggest that only those within government approved religious organizations and with government approved religious credentials would be allowed to acknowledge the religious exemption. This seems like an obvious contradiction to the First Amendment which states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof".

It is also discriminatory to require people choosing to exercise their religious beliefs to divulge personal health information. I find this a very concerning overreach and it sets a dangerous precedent.

Is it appropriate for the government to decide that people do not have the right to make their own medical decisions? Is it

constitutional for the government to impose restrictions on the right to exercise freedom of religion? Are we washing away religious freedom by insisting that people obtain governmental approval in order to uphold their promises to God?

I urge you to oppose HB7005.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ashley Beauregard