

Dear Esteemed Committee Members:

I am writing to **OPPOSE** HB7005 *AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARENTAL STATEMENTS CONCERNING RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS TO VACCINATION BY SCHOOL NURSES AND PERMITTING MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY TO ACKNOWLEDGE SUCH STATEMENTS.*

This bill is illogical and unconstitutional with the intent to cause undue burden to those choosing to use the religious exemption to vaccination in order to attend school. No child may be denied equal access to schooling under the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. This bill would not afford equal access to education for this group of children.

The school nurse is clearly the most logical person to acknowledge the Religious Exemption to Vaccination for the following reasons: (1) the religious exemption relates specifically to a child attending school and therefore an acknowledgement by a school employee is the least burdensome and most convenient approach; (2) The school employee who most logically would acknowledge the signature on the form should be the school nurse, because this statement relates to the choice to opt out of the injection of a pharmaceutical product which pertains to the child's private medical information; (3) Medical information is protected by privacy laws in the state of Connecticut and this bill would violate our right to medical privacy and confidentiality if the school nurse is removed by forcing parents to disclose their medical information to someone who is not bound by these same laws related to medical information, as the school nurse is.

The addition of clergy to acknowledge statements under HB 7005 is equally illogical and suggests an underhanded legislative intent. Religion is a personal and private matter that may or may not have a physical place of worship or a formal religious organization with clergy. The bill clearly discriminates against those with religious beliefs who do not have clergy as part of their religion or who do not routinely attend a local place of worship. The signature required on the religious exemption under the current law is a mere acknowledgment of signature and should not be construed as any type of permission form from a religious entity. Clergy have no right to access the private and personal medical information of our children and are not bound by the same confidentiality as the school nurse with regard to medical information. This bill would force one to reveal medical information in order to exercise a religious freedom. Therefore, this bill is both unconstitutional and illogical with its infringement on our personal, religious and medical privacies and freedoms.

The intent behind HB 7005 is conveyed with quotes from the Co-Chair of the Children's Committee to the press as follows:

“The nurses see that many of these children are partially vaccinated, many times only one vaccination, the [MMR \[measles, mumps, rubella vaccine\]](#) is omitted from the recommended schedule and these nurses have a concern that the

religious exemption is being utilized with no actual religious exemption," Linehan said.

"They (the nurses) essentially feel they are being asked to lie in some circumstances," Linehan said. "Additionally some nurses also feel acknowledging the religious exemption is not only not in the purview of a nurse, but it is also counter to their medical training."

These statements demonstrate that those supporting this bill do not understand the law as written with regard to the religious exemption. The language of the religious exemption form is clear that the purpose of the signature by the nurse or any other person listed is solely to be a witness to acknowledge that the person signing the exemption form is who they say they are, and that they are signing the form for the purposes of using their religious rights to opt out of vaccination in order to attend school. The person witnessing cannot make judgments about the specific religious reasons parents have for opting out of this pharmaceutical intervention. They are there to witness the signature and that alone. They are not "being asked to lie," assuming they know who the parent is and that the parent knows what the purpose of the form is. Additionally, some parents may legitimately have BOTH religious and safety concerns about vaccination and this does not disqualify them from using the religious exemption for their children to attend school, and certainly does not mean they are "lying" to the nurse by submitting the religious exemption.

It appears that the legislative intent behind this bill is to weaken and eventually abolish our religious exemption to vaccines. It is no secret that the pharmaceutical companies and medical system profiting greatly from vaccines hope to abolish all exemptions to vaccination except for narrowly drawn medical circumstances. Please refer to the testimony submitted by the CT chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which states, "*We believe you should not stop at school nurses, but should eliminate this non-medical exemption totally.*" Before we head down that path towards medical tyranny, I implore you to look into the ingredients and serious side effects of these injected pharmaceutical products (over \$4 billion taxpayer money paid out for vaccine injuries) and to read about the scientific studies relating to the ingredients in these products and also the complete lack of long term, double blind, placebo controlled scientific studies supporting the safety of these injections, which is the gold standard for determining safety of any ingested or injected pharmaceutical product. If you dig into the data as we have, you might just be surprised to learn that vaccination also violates your religious beliefs.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Belval

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