

Hello Children Committee members:

I am writing in opposition to HB-7005 (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) for the following reasons.

Violation of our Medical and Religious Privacy: For parents wishing to keep their medical and religious beliefs as private as possible, the nurse must be the one that acknowledges the form in order to limit the number of people to which this information is revealed (as she will find out anyway since she is the one that collects and stores these forms at the schools). Removing her as an option negatively impacts our rights and ability to keep this information private.

Insufficient Reason For Removing School Nurse: As I understand it, the nurse is being removed because nurses have complained that they don't feel comfortable signing these forms. The solution therefore isn't to infringe upon the right to privacy (as noted above), but to better educate the nurses on their role with this form so they understand they are just confirming that the person who signed and submitted the form is who they say they are. That should not be controversial or stir up any concerns.

Alternative Intent?

In the event this bill eventually leads to an attempt to eliminate the RE all together (which I am led to believe is a possibility based on the testimony of the AAP CT chapter), I would strongly oppose this for the following reasons.

Class Discrimination: Removing the RE discriminates against the lower and middle classes. Without being able to afford private childcare nor stay home to home school, they would be forced to violate their religious beliefs. On the other hand, the upper class parents would have the means to actually choose between upholding their religious beliefs (but withholding children from school) or sending their children to school (but violating their religious beliefs).

Coercion: Removing the RE would infringe upon our personal and religious freedom. It is up to the parents to make the best decisions we can for our children, not the state, including the decision to stand by our religious beliefs. All medical interventions can only be given after fully informed consent, and accepted voluntarily in the absence of undue pressure, coercion or manipulation. Removing the religious exemption would be extreme coercion, as a parent would either have to violate their religious beliefs to allow their children to attend school, or they would honor their religious beliefs but be denied access to these basic services for their children.

I am a stay-at-home mom in Darien, with a 2.5 year old daughter and a husband who shares my passion on this topic. I have a Masters in Public Health with a concentration in biostatistics and epidemiology, and worked in biotech and pharma for ten years in which I supported their drug safety departments and managed their adverse event reporting systems. I understand we all have the health of our children in mind, as well as the public's health, and I appreciate your desire to do what you think is best for the

health of our children. I sincerely believe that my statements are in the best interest of our children's health. I hope you take these points into consideration.

Sincerely,
Jessica E. Cadieu