

February 4, 2019

Dear Children's 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.

I can not comprehend why the state of CT feels compelled to “outlaw” a school nurse’s ability to acknowledge a student’s “Religious Exemption” statement. Were there some nurses injured in the process of “acknowledging” this piece of paper? Was it against their deeply held beliefs to do so? Are they being punished for divulging private health information about the students who take religious exemptions? What is the reason that the state feels the need to “prohibit” the school nurse from acknowledging 1) the parents are who they say they are, 2) their child is who they say he/she is and 3) they are taking a religious exemption afforded them by their constitutional rights?

The school nurse is the most logical and logistically appropriate person to acknowledge such an exemption since it is his/her student in the school that they work in. That exemption is going in the nurse’s files. Another reason the nurse acknowledgement option should not be removed is to respect a student’s privacy as is their constitutional right. The nurse option is there to safeguard unnecessary exposure of a student’s private health information. Just like a child with HIV is afforded the right to privacy, so too are those who take religious exemptions to vaccines. Going to a town notary or local lawyer for such acknowledgement makes many parents, such as myself, uncomfortable and fearful of possible bullying and discrimination based on religious beliefs.

What really makes parents such as myself uncomfortable with proposed HB7005 is the latter part of the bill which is seeking to add the permission of members of the clergy to acknowledge religious exemptions. We who take such exemptions have not been asking for an additional option, nor do we want to involve “clergy.” A “clergy member” is defined as “people ordained for religious duties, especially in the Christian Church.” There are over 4,200 religions in the world and to involve clergy is not only insulting and discriminatory but completely unconstitutional.

The only conclusion I can draw from the submission of this unwarranted bill is that whatever or whoever is behind it, is aiming to get our state closer to removing our protected religious, parental and civil rights. This orchestrated move is not just happening in CT but in other states as well. Since 2015, there has been a blatant lobbying effort to remove all non-medical exemptions and thus forcing citizens to get vaccines (liability free medical products that have never been tested for safety) injected into their children if they want to go to school. What is the next step after that? Will it be what is happening in CA right now, which was stripped of their religious exemption rights, where the lobbying effort is setting its sights via their legislature on the homeschooling communities as well as removing all medical exemptions? Is this where we are heading? Where are families like ours to go if this happens in CT? Is there a sanctuary town, city or state for us somewhere where we can feel secure in our persons and free to follow our religious beliefs without scrutiny and punishment?

Since CT has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country and it is just a handful of families claiming that vaccines go against their deeply held religious beliefs (around 1,200) I must assume that CT is bending and bought under big pharma’s will and control. This is not freedom or justice. It is unwarranted harassment and constitutionally criminal. This country was first and foremost built on religious freedom. Any bill that attempts to go after that is un-American. Please do the right thing and OPPOSE HB7005.

Thank you for your time,

Gina Consiglio
Madison, CT

