

February 7th, 2019

Distinguished Chairs and Children's Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for Bill 7005.

I would like to oppose this bill because religion is a private, personal matter and a clergy should not be involved in a parent's decision to use a religious exemption.

As per its own definition, religion is a particular system of faith and worship or a pursuit or interest to which someone ascribes supreme importance.

According to some estimates, there are over 4,200 religions in the world today and not all of them have a clergy, making this bill unconstitutional and discriminatory.

I'm sure you are all aware, but the 1st Amendment was adopted in 1791 and established a separation of church and state and prohibited the government from making any law "respecting an establishment of religion." The amendment also prohibits the government from interfering with a person's religious beliefs or practices.

The United States of America is a free country and our rights should be respected and protected.

To have some idea on numbers regarding school children in CT, there are 535,025 kids enrolled in public schools, 72,770 enrolled in private schools, and 5,324 enrolled in preschools in the state. A total of 613,119 students in CT from preschool to high school.

Currently there are 1,255 families using the religious exemption which represents only about 4.8% of the students in CT. With that said, the religious exemption is not a threat and does not need to be changed.

Thank you for your time and your attention to this overreaching bill. Please do not allow this bill to move forward in CT (The Constitution State), as it is clearly unconstitutional and undermines our god given freedom of religion.

Sincerely,

Dominic

Concerned Parent