

Greetings,

I'm here in opposition to HB 7005 as a private citizen and as founder and representative of Informed Choice USA, a newly formed consumer advocacy and education group.

As written, this bill serves no interest for the state. There were no problems with the current exemption form, or the process in which it was submitted.

If a child is going to get a religious exemption, why does it matter where that acknowledgment came from? Where is the state interest?

Feedback from legislators suggests that "school nurses don't want to get involved" with this contentious topic.

If that is truly the case, (we don't think it is) a very simple and inexpensive solution would be to educate nurses to understand their role as a signatory.

- They are only confirming the identity of the signer.
- They are not confirming anyone's creed., and in fact, should not be asking any questions about it.
- They are not agreeing or disagreeing.
- Refusal to acknowledge a parent's form is discrimination of creed.

Solution- Let's get them a memo as soon as possible clarifying this for them, free of legislative intervention.

Further, adding a clergy member to the list of signatories on the acknowledgment page is unnecessary, and adds an additional element of confusion and panic to parents all over the state.

We are receiving a flood of feedback, including the attached letter from the Universal Life Ministries.

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/KIDdata/Tmy/2019HB-07005-R000207-Sullivan,%20William,%20Reverend-Universal%20Life%20Church%20Ministries-TMY.PDF>

It's clear by this submitted testimony, that the clergy also misunderstands what their role would be as a signatory.

The bigger problem here is the impending legislative creep.

In the attached testimony from the AAP, it's clear they are in support of removing all non medical exemptions, and indicates to us that there is a bigger agenda at play here.

https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/KIDdata/Tmy/2019HB-07005-R000207-Wood,%20Jillian,%20Executive%20Director-CT%20Chapter%20American%20Academy%20of%20Pediatrics-TMY.PDF?fbclid=IwAR2Yvorskjt8KNPVeoHZU1PJ_qW1hxK27i-8p2vz2qYAqvX3oS8USjMaAI

Of note: “We believe you should not stop at school nurses, but should eliminate this non-medical exemption totally.”

History has shown that members of this committee, in the past, have introduced seemingly innocuous legislation that garnered

widespread support in the community, and proposed last minute amendments on the floor that contradicted every thing that was promised to supporters.

This has completely shaken the community's trust in this committee, and for that reason we respectfully request and assert that this bill be thrown out immediately, to prevent this from happening.

Moving forward with a bill that as written, has no state interest, can only mean that there is an impending amendment.

IF that is this committee's intention, we would like to make it very clear that any attempt to remove religious exemptions entirely in the state of CT would **NOT** reconcile constitutionally for the following reasons and will be met with great opposition:

1. CT general Statues 10-15c state that discrimination in public schools is illegal.
2. There is absolutely ZERO difference between kids who are medically exempt and kids who are religiously exempt, this is an egregious attempt at religious discrimination and again, will be met with great opposition.
3. Please reference the first amendment, specifically the **FIRST FREEDOM** of the first amendment.
4. As mentioned on her legislative profile, Liz Linehan believes in the separation of church and state, so we are excited to ask for her support in killing this bill immediately and preventing any type of integration. (Re: the establishment clause).

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to many future dealings with this committee to further protect the best interest of the children in CT.

Kindly,

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