

I have several concerns about this proposed legislation. It is unnecessary, and inappropriate. There is no reason to change the current list of people allowed to acknowledge a religious exemption in this state. Many people feel most comfortable with the option of a school nurse since that person already has access to their children's protected health information.

What is far more chilling and even more inappropriate is the proposed addition of a clergy member as someone who can acknowledge a religious exemption. This is a clear attempt to turn the simple acknowledgement of a parent's signature into a type of agreement on the clergy's part that the objection is in line with the recommendations of the clergy or established religious doctrine. Why else would they need to be added to an already sufficient list of people? It makes no sense unless this is the desired result after the bill is changed at the last minute. This is legislative creep at its worst and government over reach. Many people practice religious beliefs privately, without direction of clergy. My religious convictions are my business and mine alone. One must remember the U.S. Supreme Court already decided in *Frazee v Illinois Dept. of Security* that no established religious doctrine is needed in order for a person to be allowed the free exercise of their religious beliefs. The acknowledgement in and of itself is a violation of privacy of children's health information, and the addition of clergy is a violation of privacy in regards to religious beliefs and practices.

We have lawmakers assembling in Connecticut that have made it clear both verbally and in writing to their constituents that they intend to have the religious exemption from vaccination removed from Connecticut law. Our very small communities of people religiously opposed to vaccination are under attack by threat of removing the right from our children of an education that we all pay for with our tax dollars. I can't believe this would even be entertained in free country. This is **DISCRIMINATION**. This is **UNACCEPTABLE** in a nation that recognizes the separation of church and state. Connecticut has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country, just as it always has had and this legislation, and others being proposed this session, feel like nothing but a witch hunt to discriminate against a small group of people. Please do the right thing and **OPPOSE** this bill.

Sincerely
Mark Hinze
Norwalk, CT