

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you today to ask that you prevent HB 7005: 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 from passing.

In 2015, Connecticut added legislation requiring religious exemptions to be observed and signed by an authority. This was nothing more than an attempt to make it difficult for individuals to exercise their freedom of religion with regard to vaccination. Since 2015, parents exercising their constitutional rights have carried out the undue burden of this authorization. It is my understanding that the changes proposed to the religious exemption in HB 7005 will do nothing to contribute to improvement in health, ease of practicing individual rights as a citizen, and will in fact make it more difficult.

- Removing the nurse as an individual authorized to witness my signature leaves open the risk of private health information being shared.
- Adding clergy as an authorized individual authorized to witness my signature leaves open the risk of private health information being shared.
- This legislative action appears to be a progression within a step wise plan to remove religious exemption completely. This would be a violation of my first amendment rights as a United States citizen. Our forefathers thought so highly of protecting our religious freedoms that not only is it listed first within the Bill of Rights, but it is the first statement within the first amendment.
- While I am very comfortable conversing and discussing life, philosophy, religion, and at times, health with a pastor or other member of the clergy, I reserve the right to do so on my terms and for the topics of my choosing.

This bill is nothing more than bullying at its core. Connecticut has one of the highest levels of compliance for vaccination in the United States. An attempt to target those individuals who value a different belief system is unacceptable and maintaining such a belief system is protected by the US government and should be by the government by the state of Connecticut.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Denise Jenkins-Krom