

February 5, 2019

Dear Members of the Committee on Children,

I am writing to urge you to OPPOSE HB 7005: AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PARENTAL STATEMENTS CONCERNING RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS TO VACCINATION BY SCHOOL NURSES AND PERMITTING MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY TO ACKNOWLEDGE SUCH STATEMENTS.

I oppose this bill for similar reasons as many other parents who have written in opposition of this bill. Connecticut has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country, over 98% for school-aged children. With only a small number of families exercising their religious beliefs by declining vaccinations, I have a deep concern that the intent of this legislation isn't to address the public's health but a strike on a minority group's religious beliefs. The proposed changes are unnecessary. Adding a clergy as a member to acknowledge the religious exemption is confusing and misleading as it may imply "agreement" rather than "acknowledgement" by the clergy. It is also unconstitutional, as it discriminates against religions that don't have an overseeing clergy. Furthermore, this bill removes the option to protect a student's private health information by allowing a nurse to acknowledge the religious exemption. This bill is discriminatory towards children, a minority group with sincere religious beliefs, and takes away their right to public education. Please OPPOSE HB 7005 and uphold our First Amendment right as it is one of the foundations of this country.

Sincerely,

Sinthy Khamsaeng

Meriden, CT