

Donna Kosiorowski RN MS NCSN  
3 Henry Drive  
Shelton, Connecticut 06484  
203-929-4019  
[Donnak.ncsn@gmail.com](mailto:Donnak.ncsn@gmail.com)

**Senator Mary Abrams, Representative Liz Linehan and members of the Committee on Children**

**This testimony is submitted in favor of:**

**H.B. No. 7005 (RAISED) 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. (KID)**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 7005 which would remove the school nurse from witnessing a religious exemption form for parents.

The role of the school nurse involves educating parents about the health and safety of their children. Such education includes information about vaccines and the diseases vaccines have the potential to prevent. School nurses, under the current law, may be required to sign a religious exemption form for a parent claiming to have a religious objection to vaccines. Many, if not all parents, have no religious objection; they simply do not want to have their child receive vaccines. The requirement for a nurse to witness such a document places the nurse in a challenging situation knowing the parent is misrepresenting the truth. The nurse, as a result, is signing a falsified document.

To my knowledge, the Catholic religion does not oppose vaccines; yet Catholic parents are knowingly falsifying the belief when they sign the vaccine exemption based on religion. If there are religions that oppose vaccines, most religions do not take that stance. As a school nurse for many years I do know the history of religious exemption when a clergy signature was required. For reasons unknown, requirement for a clergy signature was eliminated. It is time we returned to the original and legal intent of the law.

I am of the generation that witnessed communicable diseases such as measles, chickenpox, and mumps and am aware of the disease process and the actual and potential impact of each one. The news reports an increase in vaccine preventable diseases due to those who come from countries where vaccines are not available or accessible or in those who choose not to vaccinate.

According to the CDC, “in 1912, measles became a nationally notifiable disease in the United States, requiring U.S. healthcare providers and laboratories to report all diagnosed cases. In the first decade of reporting, an average of **6,000 measles-related deaths** were reported each year. In the decade before 1963 when a vaccine became available, nearly all children got measles by the time they were 15 years of age. It is estimated 3 to 4 million people in the United States were infected each year. Also each year, among reported cases, an estimated 400 to 500 people died, 48,000 were hospitalized, and 1,000 suffered encephalitis (swelling of the brain) from measles.”

I urge you to support removal of the nurse’s signature and replace it with language from the bill:

“(G) 28 [notwithstanding any provision of chapter 6, a school nurse] an 29 ordained, commissioned or licensed member of the clergy;”

Respectfully submitted, *Donna Kosiorowski MS RN NCSN*