

February 5, 2019

Dear Members of the Committee on Children,

We are 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.

We are writing to you as fathers, husbands, brothers, and concerned residents of Connecticut to oppose HB 7005 as pharmaceutical vaccines go against our moral and religious beliefs. We question the intent of this legislation since Connecticut has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country with only a small number of families exercising their religious beliefs to decline vaccinations. With religious exemptions being targeted across the country, this legislation is a precursor in eliminating the rights of a small minority of families in Connecticut. We urge you to uphold one of the most important rights our forefathers have established for us as this bill infringes on the First Amendment which prohibits the limitation of religious expression. As it is unconstitutional to impose one religion for everyone, we believe it is also unconstitutional to impose a "one size fits all" medical approach for everyone. While we understand the need to maintain public health, it needs to be balanced with individual liberty. With advances in technology and medical care, we believe there should be a better approach to maintain public health without restricting individual liberty.

With that said, we believe 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, by removing the option for a nurse to acknowledge the religious exemption, this bill removes the option to protect a student's private health information. This bill is discriminatory towards children 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,

Carlos M Rosado Jr. III

Jaime R Matos

Meriden, CT