

As a long-time Connecticut resident and (for over 45 years) a teacher of history to several generations of students, I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed bill, HB 7005. Having taught constitutional history for many years, it is my firm conviction that the framers of the Constitution did not advocate turning over the raising of people's children to politicians. The protection of religious freedom is one of our most cherished rights, and parents whose religious beliefs do not accommodate mandatory vaccination of their children should not be forced in any way to have those rights abrogated by special interest groups. HB 7005 seeks to remove from school nurses the ability to acknowledge parental statements concerning religious objections to mandatory vaccination, and vest this "authority" with a member of the clergy. Such legislation is intrusive, unwarranted and unnecessary.

Families with children have far more connection and interaction with school nurses than they may have with clergy. The assumption behind this bill is that all religious beliefs are expressible through a mainstream, organized church, which is simply not so. Many people practice religious beliefs privately, without the direction of clergy or an organized church. The United States Supreme Court (*Frazee vs, Illinois Department of Employment Security, 1989*) has already ruled that no established religious doctrine is needed in order for a person to be allowed the free exercise of their religious beliefs. This effort to insert clergy into the acknowledgment of religious objection statements is a clear violation of that principle.

I believe that this Orwellian bill is unnecessary, unconstitutional, and a perfect example of "legislative creep" - the tendency of state and local governments to be increasingly intrusive in the lives of their citizens. Please OPPOSE this legislation.

Respectfully yours,

Michael McNaught
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