

February 4, 2019

Dear Esteemed Children's Committee Members,

I am writing to you today to express my strong opposition to 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.

Let me start with the first part of the bill, removing school nurses as approved signers to the acknowledgement form. I am not sure why the nurses are being removed, as the form is not asking for an approval of a parent's religious belief, but instead to verify that the parent is who he says he is, the child is who he says he is, and that the parent is exercising his right to an exemption afforded to him under the law. The nurse does not need to know anything about the family's religious beliefs, nor should it have any contradiction to his/her own. In addition, the school nurse already knows a child's vaccination status, as that is being given to them by submission of health forms. The other acceptable people to acknowledge the forms (Judges, Family Court Magistrate, Town Clerk, Notary Public, Justice of the Peace, and Commissioner of the Superior Court) are not already privy to that information and have no need to know about a family's health choices. Nor are they as accessible as a school nurse, where one's child goes every day. To give them access to this information, unfortunately, would open the family up to possible negative repercussions, as our communities are currently much divided on the issue of vaccinations.

In regards to the second part of the bill, the addition of clergy members as approved signers on the acknowledgement form, I have not heard of anyone, outside of the legislature, asking for an additional option, and certainly not one who's closely tied to religion. There are 4200 religions, and not all of those religions have a clergy, nor does everyone who practices a religion belong to a formal house of worship. The addition of clergy to the acknowledgement form is a violation of the separation of church and state, and goes against a family's first amendment rights.

If the reason for this second change is the concern that families are using the religious exemption falsely, as a way to avoid injecting vaccines (which contain aborted fetal cells, animal DNA and cells), then perhaps the legislature would like to implement a philosophical exemption, which 17 other states do currently offer. It is also difficult to pinpoint each religion's view on the subject, as not all religious leaders, even under the same denomination, hold the same views on the matter. That can be seen with the current split in the Judaic community. Although the louder voice is pushing its members to be vaccinated, there are rabbis that feel denying vaccines are part of Halacha.

No matter what your feeling is on vaccines themselves, as a representative in our government, representing the people your district, you should be upholding a family's right to live by their beliefs. You would do this by voting against HB 7005.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Amy Monticello
West Hartford, CT