

Dear Members of the Children's Committee,

I'm writing to you to ask you to **oppose** HB 7005.

I was born in Eastern Europe under the Communist regime. My mother was a teacher and was prohibited to practice any kind of religious faith under the constant threat of job loss or worse – imprisonment. We had to drive every weekend several hours to a different city to practice our faith, in fear of my mother being recognized and reported in our town. I refuse to ever live in fear because of my religion again!

Religion is a private, internal belief and requiring a clergy signature is unconstitutional and discriminatory against religions that are not guided by a clergy person. Religion is also protected by our Constitution and as Liz Linehan mentioned in her bio "I believe in separation of church and state".

I'm sure by now you are all familiar with the case U.S. Supreme Court *Frazee vs. Illinois, Department of Security*, 489 U.S. 829 found that state may NOT deny an exemption simply because a person is not a member of a formal religious organization".

This bill would walk all over our right to practice our religious freedom.

I'm also not fond of removing the nurse option from the exemption form. It is there to protect student's unnecessary exposure of his/her health information if a parent wishes to use this option. As you know, nurses can decline to sign, it is not mandatory on their end and also it doesn't mean that they agree with the parent's choice.

I chose this country and this state because of the freedom and opportunity to live your life and practice your faith as you see fit without harassment, without persecution but if that is taken away from me by passing bills similar to HB 7005 I will not stay in this state and possibly not even in this country. I believe there is more people that feel this way!

Please, consider the reasons listed above and vote against legislation to remove or in any way restrict vaccine exemptions.

Sincerely,

Julia Orozco

Stamford, CT

February 5, 2019