

Dear Children's Committee Members.

I would like to express **my opposition to the proposed HB 7005: an act prohibiting the acknowledgement of parental statements concerning religious objection to vaccination by school nurses and permitting members of the clergy to acknowledge such statements.**

Religion is a deeply personal journey that it is taken by the individual along with their God/gods/etc. I am so grateful and blessed to live in a country where my religious beliefs are protected and generally respected by most. I am also fortunate enough to live in a country where these beliefs are protected under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. While my children are still quite young, these are pillars that I try to instill in them.

It saddens me that parents are being harassed and required to have another adult acknowledge that they are who they say they are with regards to private medical information of their minor children. Being that school nurses will already be receiving this sensitive private information, it only makes sense that they would continue to acknowledge any religious exemptions. As this bill stands, there does not seem to be any issue or concern, so I am wondering where is it in the interest of the state to remove school nurse and add clergy. School nurses are simply being asked to acknowledge that I am who I say I am and nothing more. So, I am left wondering perhaps we need to better educate our nurses on their role in this exemption.

Religious beliefs and medical decisions do not go hand in hand. I think of all the instances in which people within the same faith have conflicting religious beliefs, interpretations, and/or differing convictions shared only with their God. I am uncomfortable mixing these two worlds. Our medical information should not need to be shared with anyone; clergy or otherwise in order to have religious freedoms preserved and upheld. Religion is a private matter. It feels as though it is an invasion of my family's intimate space. Further, it should not be assumed that someone with strong religious beliefs be directly tied to a clergy member or be part of an organized religion with clergy. I was always under the impression that CT as well as all other states believed in a separation of church and state.

My request is quite simple. I ask that all members of the Children's Committee do their diligence and not allow this bill to advance. I ask that the committee protect my and every American's rights. I ask that you respect the privacy of all families specifically the small minority using a religious exemption. Our current legislation seems to be working.

I sincerely thank you all again for your time in reading through my email and for your commitment to our nation, our state, and all of its individual residents.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle S.
Fairfield County