

Testimony of Jessica Stewart

East Hampton, CT

Joint Committee on Children H.B. 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.

February 6, 2019

Representative Lenehan, Representative Elliot, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Stewart and I am submitting testimony in opposition to Raised 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.

As a parent of a vaccine injured child, it is my right to have the religious exemption form signed by a party whom will protect my HIPPA rights. It is also my right as a parent to make medical choices which are in the best interest of my children. Taking away school nurses' ability to sign religious exemption forms leaves me no other option than to share my medical information of my child with someone so they will sign the document. The signature on the Religious Exemption is just that, my signature. This change violates HIPPA laws in that it forces parents to use another option from the approved list, thus having to share my religious beliefs and private medical information.

To be clear, an acknowledgment is NOT permission to claim an exemption, but rather it is to authorize the person signing to confirm they are who they say they are. I am confused as to what the motive is to make this change now since prior to 2017 no signatures were required; in 2017 signatures were added. Clergy are taking care of their people in their churches, they are not there to read and sign paperwork from the State. This change also puts an undue burden on clergy in CT with added paperwork, but more so in now their parishioners will need to come to them and share their personal medical information with them. A school nurse acknowledgement of the form is the best option for parents who don't want to reveal their private medical decisions, as nurses have seen their medical documents through their child's educational career. What is the point in taking away this option other than to make it more difficult for parents? It seems to me

Testimony of Jessica Stewart, Opposing HB 7005

this bill is being proposed to put the religious exemption up for discussion with the end goal to eliminate the exemption altogether. It has been well-publicized that there has been a concentrated effort over the past several years in many states to take away non-medical exemptions to mandatory vaccination. In my opinion, this makes me suspect the point to raising HB 7005 is a way yet again to attack parental rights. We should be holding Doctors accountable and making them follow the vaccine inserts which states they must review the vaccine insert with anyone they plan to administer a vaccine to; it's called informed consent. Let's move in this direction instead of taking more rights away. I ask you to oppose this bill and leave our rights in tack as they stand today.

Some enlightening reading material:

<https://healthimpactnews.com/2017/harvard-immunologist-to-legislators-unvaccinated-children-pose-zero-risk-to-anyone/>

<https://academic.oup.com/cid/article/58/9/1205/2895266>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/3618578/>

<https://medscienceresearch.com/shedding/>

Thank you,  
Jessica Stewart