

To the members of Connecticut's Committee on Children,

I kindly ask you to oppose 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.

School nurses are among the few people who may acknowledge a parent's signature on the Religious Exemption form. We, the parents often turn to the school nurse for two main reasons. Firstly, parents usually have well-established relations with the school nurse. School nurses are there for us, they know us and they are willing to help. Secondly, we the parents turn to the school nurse as we wish to share our kids' personal medical data with as little people as possible.

However, the part of HB-7005 that calls for permitting members of the clergy to acknowledge a parent's signature is even more disturbing. It empowers the church to represent and act on behalf of the State. It basically blurs the separation of church and state. Our country is known for protecting its citizens' freedoms and constitutional rights. Freedom of religion is fundamental and is guaranteed under the First Amendment. Yet, HB-7005 targets one of our most important freedoms.

With consideration for all of the above I urge you to oppose HB-7005 and protect our basic constitutional rights.

Sincerely,

Irina Zakharova