Committee on Children

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7005
AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FORM TO BE USED BY PARENTS WHO OBJECT TO IMMUNIZATION ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS AND NOTIFICATION TO SCHOOL NURSES CONCERNING DISCRETION IN ACKNOWLEDGING SUCH OBJECTIONS.

Vote Date: 3/12/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 2/7/2019
File No.: 188

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:
To remove nurses from the statute allowing them to acknowledge parental statements concerning religious exemptions to vaccinations and replace them with clergy.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Representative Anne Dauphinais, 44th District
Representative Dauphinais testified in opposition of this bill. She believes that this change would infringe on the students privacy under HIPAA laws.

Raul Pino, Commissioner-Department of Public Health
Testified in support of this proposed bill. Stated the inclusion of school nurses in the list of persons that acknowledge a religious exemption statement may place nurses in a tenuous position, in that they are required to validate that the exemption meets the legal criteria. Raul also said that a school nurse is supposed to protect the health, safety and welfare of the student body as a whole.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Sarah Caro
Testified in support of HB 7005 and believes that vaccine exemptions should require the approval of a clergy member.
Myla Wilson
Myla testified in support of this bill. She and her family rely on immunity in order to stay healthy. This bill would ensure that children with medical problems stay safe.

Judith Hanratty
Judith testified in support of the bill, believing that unvaccinated children are a danger to themselves and others.

Bhargavi Ramamurthy, PhD
Testified in support of this bill and stated that nurses be removed from the list, and we should defer to their collective expertise and role in our society and further urges religious exemption be taken away for vaccines.

Donna Kosiorowski, RN
Donna testified in support of this proposed bill. She state that the role of the school nurse involves educating parents about the health and safety of their children. Such education includes information about vaccines and the diseases vaccines have the potential to prevent.

Harold Jordan
He supports this bill stating that this subject has the potential to be a national health emergency.

Katerina Politi
Katerina supports this proposed bill. She stated that the effectiveness of vaccines depends on how many people are vaccinated. She is worried of a major health crisis starting.

Danielle Morfi
Danielle supports this bill and stated a nurse's job is to uphold the medical safety of others. Having them sign off on Religious Exemption Forms goes against everything they were taught studied and practiced.

Laura Orban
She supports this proposed bill and thinks exemptions should not be allowed for any reason other than a medical condition. The growing population of unvaccinated children is causing a public health risk. People who cannot be vaccinated due to compromised immune systems are now at risk of infection with diseases that were all but eradicated thanks to vaccines.

Lisa Kaston
Lisa spoke in support of the bill. She stated that vaccines are important to keep child-borne illnesses at bay. She believes that nurses should not be asked to sign these forms and questions whether clergy should even be included in the list as well.

Terra Volpe
Terra testified to her firsthand knowledge of parents abusing the religious exemption. She believes people are lying to manipulate the system and is worried about disease outbreaks.

Lori Kaylor Flaherty, RN BSN
Lori testified in support of this bill because as a school nurse she feels that acknowledging a signature for a religious exemption “creates a dilemma as their professional responsibility is to promote a healthy school environment.

**Todd Szoka**
Todd testified in support of this bill. He stated that vaccine exemptions should require approval from a religious official.

**Seth Rosenthal**
Seth testified in support of this bill and stated scientific evidence clearly indicates that we all depend on “herd immunity” to keep ourselves and our children healthy and safe.

**Gina Teixeira**
Gina supports this bill and believes that vaccine exemptions should require the approval from clergy. She is worried that her six-month old daughter will get sick from another child in the neighborhood.

**Rebecca Tulin**
Rebecca testified in support of this bill. She particularly supports the provision that requires approval from clergy in order to receive this exemption.

**Jillian Wood**
Jillian supports this bill. Routine immunizations are vital to the health of society, not just the individual. These immunizations can prevent disease outbreaks in communities.

**Erin Verrusso**
Erin supports this bill. She is a member of many facebook groups that have members encouraging people to use this exemption to avoid vaccinations. She believes this exemption is being abused and poses a risk to everyone’s health.

**Alex Villamil**
Alex supports this bill and thinks that approval from clergy is more necessary than the current statutory requirements.

**Mary Zorzanello**
Mary supports this bill.

**Debra Mastroni-Kenyon**
Debra supports the removal of school nurses but opposes the addition of clergy.

**Nicole Matrhews**
Nicole supports this proposed bill and believes there are few medical reasons for exemption and too many people are using the religious exemption as an excuse to not vaccinate their children, effectively putting those who are truly unable to be vaccinated at great risk.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Helen Albert**
Opposes this bill and considers it state overreach. She believes that this bill is a violation of her first amendment right to freedom of religion and is in violation of separation of church and state.

**Amy Mrowka**  
Amy believes this bill is a clear breach of privacy and infringes on her religious rights.

**Chris Wrinn**  
Chris testified in opposition of this bill because it has not been proven that vaccines do not cause life-altering issues in young people.

**Michele Alosi**  
Testified in opposition of this bill stating it violates her constitutional rights to freedom of religion. She also stated that she believes this is bill is discriminatory against religions without a clergy.

**C. Ambrose**  
Testified against the bill and stated that it is a threat to her parental and religious freedom to raise her children as she sees fit.

**Ashley Murica**  
Ashley believes adding clergy to the religious exemption form, we are once again allowing the government to step over its boundaries into our religious lives.

**Amy I**  
Amy is opposed to this bill because removing the school nurse acknowledgement and adding clergy is unnecessary and begins to combine church and state, which she feels should be kept separate.

**Maria Krupa**  
She testified in opposition of this bill and asked the committee members to ask why this legislation is being proposed. She stated that the change is completely unnecessary.

**Marcella Kurowski**  
Marcella testified that this proposed legislative change is unnecessary, unwarranted and completely inappropriate.

**Kristina Isacson**  
Kristina opposes this bill because it takes away her religious freedoms.

**Nord Isacson**  
He opposes this bill because it hinders his religious freedoms.

**Kimberly Jenkins**  
Kimberly testified in opposition of this bill because it goes against the most important constitutional amendment. It also violates her right to choose as a woman.

**Dr. Jessica**
She opposes this bill because of the need for the separation of church and state. Also, there is no compelling interest for this proposed change to current law, and she has deep concern that there may be intent not expressed in the current language.

**Randy B**
Randy B testified that the current law is sufficient making this bill unnecessary. He also believes that this bill is an attack on his 1st amendment rights.

**Katherine Bailey**
Katherine opposes the bill and believes that it is an overstep of the government.

**Layla Balali**
Testified against this bill because she believes it is a violation of her First Amendment rights and a violation of the separation of church and state.

**Kevin Barry**
Kevin opposes this bill and stated that it infringes on his religious beliefs and is a violation of the First Amendment.

**Meredith Nielson**
Meredith stated that having to take the form to a stranger in a public setting is invasive and can be very uncomfortable. She opposes this bill.

**Lisa Bauerle**
Opposes this bill, stating that it goes against the first amendment and violates her religious freedoms.

**Jolene**
She believes this bill violates her rights as an American citizen and is a violation of the separation of church and state.

**Cynthia K**
Cynthia testified that the state should never be in charge of someone’s body. This is an infringement on her religious beliefs.

**Dow K**
Dow testified in opposition of this bill. Considers this bill to be a violation of their, and every Connecticut resident’s freedoms. Everyone has the right to determine if foreign substances should be injected into their body.

**Joan Noqueria**
Joan testified that this bill violates HIPAA laws and is a direct violation of someone’s First Amendment rights to religious freedom.

**Jennifer K**
Jennifer testified against this bill. She stated it is her choice as an individual and as a parent to choose what to put into her kids bodies.

**George Kavanagh**
George testified that he has the right to deny foreign substance from being injected into his body.

**Susan Kepich**  
Susan believes that changing the current law is unnecessary. Connecticut has a high vaccination rate and there is currently no outbreak.

**Ashley Beauregard**  
Ashley testified against this bill. She considers this bill is a violation of her religious freedoms.

**Dominic**  
Testified against this bill because he believes it is a violation of his First Amendment rights and a violation of the separation of church and state.

**Becky Duff**  
Testified against this bill because she believes it is a violation of her First Amendment rights and a violation of the separation of church and state.

**Rebecca Durfee**  
Tested against the bill and stated that it is a threat to her parental and religious freedom to raise her children as she sees fit.

**Priscilla Escobar**  
Priscilla testified in opposition of this bill because she believes it goes against her First Amendment rights.

**Donna F**  
Opposes this bill, stating that it goes against her first amendment rights and violates her religious freedoms.

**Adam Galicki**  
Adam testified in opposition of this bill because the adding of clergy is inappropriate. He states it is a violation of privacy in regard to religious beliefs. He also stated that many lawmakers have made it clear they wish to eliminate the religious exemption and that this bill is a clear pathway to religious discrimination.

**Kristen Festa**  
Kristin spoke in opposition of this bill. She stated it violates her First Amendment right to religious freedom.

**William Comstock**  
William testified against this bill. He stated that religious beliefs are protected under the First Amendment and that acknowledgement on religious exemption should not be required at all.

**Jacqueline Flynn**  
Jacqueline opposes this bill and stated that it infringes on her religious beliefs and is a violation of the First Amendment.

**Jennifer Frost**
She testified in opposition of this bill. She considers this a violation to her religious freedoms.

**Corrine G**
Corrine testified against this bill because it is a violation of her religious freedoms.

**Honorata L**
Honorata testified that there is no issue with how the law is currently written and that the school nurse is a logical choice for acknowledging the family’s exemption from vaccines as this form is submitted to a school.

**Jason Y**
He testified that this is against his religious beliefs and that it is his constitutional right to protect those beliefs. Jason stated that requiring a clergy member’s signature is ridiculous.

**Desiree G**
Stated she opposes this bill because it raises religious freedom concerns.

**Jessica G**
She is in opposition of this bill because parents shouldn’t be forced to immunize their children. Also considers it an overreach from the government.

**Sofia L**
Sofia testified that parents prefer to have the school nurse acknowledge the exemption because they want to keep their health information private.

**Jennifer Lagace**
She believes that this bill infringes on her rights as an American as Church and State should always be separated. The government should never be involved in making choices for everyone as a whole, especially in decisions parents make with/on behalf of their children.

**Angie Prindle**
Angie testified that she opposes any bill that takes away or restricts parental rights. This proposed bill is a attack against those that use the exemption correctly.

**Resident of Colechester**
Resident opposes this bill and considers it an attack on religious freedom.

**Hannah Gale**
She testified in opposition because removing nurses from the list of people that can acknowledge a parents signature for religious exemption adds more difficulty. She stated that religious beliefs are protected under the First Amendment and that acknowledgement on religious exemption should not be required at all.

**Nicole Galiette**
Stated she is in opposition of this bill because removal of school nurses from acknowledging the religious exemption form is unnecessary. The student’s medical history is protected under FERPA with the school nurse; the same rules do not apply for members of the clergy. She is concerned that the proposed legislation could be a way to remove the religious exemption altogether.
**Megan Belval**  
She testified in opposition. Stated that this bill does not provide equal access to education to all children and that the school nurse is the most logical person to acknowledge the Religious Exemption to Vaccinations. Also, she stated that the bill discriminates against people who do not have clergy as part of their religion. This bill would be an infringement on her religious and medical privacy freedoms.

**Stephanie Obrien**  
Stephanie feels that this bill is a direct violation of the First Amendment.

**Julia Orozco**  
Julia stated 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.

**Stephanie Ostrander**  
Stephanie opposes this bill and testified that as a school nurse she is entrusted to advocate for, educate, and help to ensure the privacy and autonomy of my patients regarding their healthcare choices.

**Marybeth Orlowski**  
Marybeth opposes this bill because the school nurse is the logical choice to acknowledge the signature for most families as they are accessible and bound by HIPAA. She also believes this bill infringes on her religious beliefs.

**Nicole C**  
Nicole opposes this bill because she believes there isn’t a problem with the current process. As a nurse it is her job to protect the HIPAA rights of her patients. She believes it is not the business of clergy, or non-medical professionals, to know a child’s vaccination history.

**Jessica E Cadieu**  
Jessica testified in opposition of this bill because it would be a violation of medical and religious privacy. She believes that removing the religious exemption would discriminate the lower class because they would be forced to violate their religious beliefs. She also stated that removing the religious exemption would infringe upon religious freedoms.

**Art Calef**  
Stated he opposes this bill because it encroaches on the privacy of the guardian or parent. The school nurse is the only person who is bound by HIPPA laws. He also stated that the bill adds an additional step of bureaucracy by removing the school nurse from the list of signers. He also believes that adding clergy members as a signer will add confusion about the purpose of the signer.

**Marta Owsianko**  
Marta feels the proposed change is very unnecessary. It would go against our freedom of religion, and beliefs.

**Meagan La Pierre**
Meagan opposes this bill and stated that questioning one’s religious believes is discriminatory.

**William Sullivan**
Testified that as an ordained minister it is his job to watch over parishioners, not acknowledge documents. He believes that religious beliefs are personal convictions that can't be decided by other people.

**Pamela Pinto**
Pamela opposes this bill or any others that would restrict religious freedoms.

**Dr. Elissa Diamond-Fields**
She opposes this bill due to the fact that it is unnecessary. The addition of clergy as a signer is also questionable and makes parents uncomfortable. She stated that bills aimed at restricting the religious exemption are unwarranted harassment. Parents have the right to opt out of any medical product or procedure. There have been recent court decisions that have upheld the religious rights people have been seeking for exemptions from immunizations.

**Elise Emmi**
Testified in opposition of this bill because she uses the religious exemption as her beliefs and research does not agree with vaccinations. To have this right removed would be detrimental to the health and welfare of her children.

**Sarah Summers**
Sarah testified that this bill infringes on her right to have her own religious beliefs. Believes this bill is a possible infringement upon her constitutional rights.

**Brian F**
Stated he opposes this bill because it raises religious freedom concerns.

**Andrea LaSalle**
Andrea testified that it is not ethical to take away a parent’s choice to expose their child to all of the risks. Every parent must have the right to choose which risks they are comfortable exposing their children to, regardless of whether or not they belong to a church.

**Reverend Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree**
Spoke in opposition of including clergy as a religious exemption but he supports the removal of school nurses.

**Shannon Gamache**
She testified in opposition because removing nurses from the list of people that can acknowledge a parents signature for religious exemption adds more difficulty. She also believes that adding clergy increase religious involvement in state matters. She stated that religious beliefs are protected under the First Amendment and that acknowledgement on religious exemption should not be required at all.

**Alise P**
Testified any bill that violates our constitutional rights, freedom and violates religion is unconstitutional.
Dan P
Dan testified in opposition of this bill.

Jill P
Jill stated it is her right as an individual and parent to choose what medical procedures align with my beliefs and are acceptable or not for my family.

Linda Goodall
She is in opposition of this bill because parents shouldn’t be forced to immunize their children.

Victoria Lawlor
She testified in opposition of this bill and believes there is no reason to remove school nurses from the list of signers.

Pam Lucashu
Pam believes there is no reason to add clergy to the list of people who can acknowledge the signature of a parent. The school nurse is a more natural person to acknowledge a form dealing with private health information.

Katy H
Stated she is in opposition of this bill because removal of school nurses from acknowledging the religious exemption form is unnecessary. The student’s medical history is protected under FERPA with the school nurse; the same rules do not apply for members of the clergy. She is concerned that the proposed legislation could be a way to remove the religious exemption altogether.

Emma Griffin
Emma opposes this bill because the removal of the school nurse from acknowledging a parents signature gives them no choice but to share their children’s medical information with other individuals. She stated that adding clergy to the list does not make sense and can be seen as religious discrimination. This bill could eventually lead to the removal of the religious exemption.

Sinthy Khamsaeng
Sinthy opposes this bill because the proposed changes are unnecessary. Adding a clergy as a member to acknowledge the religious exemption is confusing and misleading as it may imply agreement rather than acknowledgement by the clergy.

Nicole Hall
Opposes this bill and considers it state overreach. She believes that this bill is a violation of her first amendment right to freedom of religion and is in violation of separation of church and state.

Heather Hendricks
Heather testified in opposition of the bill because removing school nurses as a trusted resource for parents would be a mistake. School nurses are medically trained and bound by HIPAA.
**Seth Swagger**
Seth believes that choices about health and bodily function should not be determined by the government. Stated this bill violates human and constitutional rights.

**Tara Swagger**
She testified that the state has no business dictating exemption rights that are constitutionally guaranteed. No one should be forced to vaccinate themselves or their children.

**Eliza Swiatek**
Eliza testified that the current law is working, therefore there is no need to get rid of the exemption. Connecticut law gives every child over the age of 5 a right to free and public education. This bill would be an infringement upon those rights.

**Amy Lussier**
Amy expressed concern on this proposed bill because removing the school nurse as a person who can acknowledge the identity of the person presenting a religious exemption is forcing parents to divulge sensitive medical information about their child to persons who otherwise would not be privy to such information.

**Stanley Block**
He opposes this bill and believes that it could be used to remove the religious exemption. He considers school nurses to be the most logical person to acknowledge the signature on the form.

**Tatiana Lukyanova**
Tatiana believes this proposed bill is an intrusion into the rights of the American people and an attempt to discriminate against people that hold certain beliefs and also believes that the end purpose of this bill is to deny individual choice and to make a medical procedure compulsory.

**AJ M**
AJ expressed concerns about the proposed legislation. He considers it legislative creep and that it blurs the line between church and state. Everyone’s religious freedoms should be protected.

**Denise M**
Denise testified this entire bill can be easily amended to remove our religious exemption all together if allowed to move forward.

**Rev Dr. Rochelle Stockhouse**
Stated his main issue with the bill was deciding on who decided who clergy is. He is opposed to any clergy involvement in the schools.

**Jessica Stewart**
She testified that she is the parent of a vaccine-injured child who wants to exercise her right to a religious exemption. It is her right as a parent to make medical decisions that are in the best interests of her children.
Melissa Sullivan
Melissa testified that there is no reason for the state to make changes to the current statute.

Erika Crawford
Erika testified against this bill. It is considered a violation of her First Amendment rights and infringes on religious freedoms. The nurse is the most appropriate person to acknowledge the signature on the form.

Debra Budet
She testified in opposition because removing nurses from the list of people that can acknowledge a parents signature for religious exemption adds more difficulty. She stated that religious beliefs are protected under the First Amendment and that acknowledgement on religious exemption should not be required at all.

Greg Rocchio
Greg considers this a complete violation of church and state.

Diana Bump
Diana is in opposition of this bill. It is considered a violation of her First Amendment rights and infringes on religious freedoms.

Matthew Paterna
Matthew testified that this bill is religious discrimination.

Peter Haddad
He is in opposition of this bill because he believes it strips the parent of the right on deciding their children’s medical decisions. He feels that at some future point the state will prohibit religious exemption.

Ingrid Rodriguez
Ingrid opposes any bill that would remove exemptions for the MMR vaccines as it carries a high rate of side effects.

Barbara C
She is in opposition of this bill because it seems like a step in removing the protected religious, parental, and civil rights. The nurse is the most appropriate person to acknowledge the exemption because they have access already to a student’s medical information. Adding clergy to the list can be discriminatory and also uncomfortable for some parents.

Teri C
Teri opposes this bill and stated that it infringes on her religious beliefs and is a violation of the First Amendment.

Dawn D
Dawn testified against this bill. She considers it a violation of her religious freedom. The nurse is also the most accessible person to acknowledge the signature on the form and has to follow HIPAA laws.

Kelly Davis
Kelly opposes this bill and believes that is violates her constitutional rights.

**Alicia Daw**
She testified in opposition of this bill. Alicia believes that it a violation of her first amendment rights and freedom to practice her religion.

**Donna Cassity**
Donna testified in opposition stating that it is a parent’s constitutional right on how they raise their children and not the government’s job to mandate that they force vaccines on children.

**Pricilla Castro**
Pricilla opposes this bill and stated that it infringes on her religious beliefs and is a violation of the First Amendment.

**Bryn Chandler**
Testified against this bill because he believes it is a pathway to removing the religious exemption. He also considers this to be a violation of his religious freedoms.

**Noel Cherubino**
Noel testified in opposition of this bill. He believes that it is an infringement on his rights provided by the First Amendment.

**Linda DeFrancesco**
Linda considers this bill to be a violation of her first amendment rights and as such, testified against it.

**Andrea Maloney**
Andrea stated the process as it exists today to file a religious exemption works and by introducing clergy to the process and removing school nurses from the process, medical privacy is at risk. It is not necessary for clergy to know someone's medical choices.

**Eileen Denny**
She testified against this bill, stating it goes against her first amendment rights and freedom of religion. The school nurse is also the appropriate person to acknowledge the signature on the form because they know the children’s medical history and are bound by HIPAA laws.

**Robert Roqueta**
Robert considers this proposed bill unnecessary and an attack on religious freedoms.

**Carlos Rosado**
Carlos testified that this bill is an attack on our most precious freedom, religious freedom. He strongly opposes this bill.

**Cassandra Marcantonio**
Cassandra stated this change is unwarranted and unneeded and rather discriminatory to those who may not have a clergy within their religion.

**Winifred Harrison**
Is in opposition of this because having a school nurse acknowledge the signature on the form is the best option since they already have access to the student’s medical records. She feels the proposed bill could be used to eliminate the religious exemption altogether.

**Stephanie Herrick**
Stephanie stated that she is in opposition of the proposed legislation. Removing the option of a school nurse to acknowledge the signature of a parent is an invasion of privacy and an infringement of rights. The current form is acceptable. The bill would also discriminate against religions that have no clergy.

**Nancy Jackson**
Nancy testified in opposition of the bill because removing school nurses as a trusted resource for parents would be a mistake. School nurses are medically trained and bound by HIPAA.

**Audrey Marandino**
Audrey testified that this bill takes away a huge freedom in our country- religious freedom.

**Mark Hinze**
Mark does not support his bill. He considers it legislative creeping into the lives of everyday citizens. It is a violation of his right to religious freedom and believes this will become a vehicle to remove the religious exemption.

**Marnie Hinze**
Marnie does not support his bill. She considers it legislative creeping into the lives of everyday citizens. It is a violation of her right to religious freedom and believes this will become a vehicle to remove the religious exemption. This bill is a clear path to religious discrimination in Connecticut.

**Shanae Pellin**
She testified that this bill is prejudiced and discriminative against any denomination that is not traditional or practiced outside an organized congregation.

**Nicholas Souza and Gina Jacket**
Both testified in opposition because the school nurse is only verifying the identity of the parent on the form. School nurses are the only ones readily available and accessible to parents on a daily basis, whilst many members of the clergy are not. There is also the conflict of separation of church and state when adding clergy to the list.

**Faith Rose**
Faith testified that it is a violation of privacy to ask a religious leader to sign my exemption.

**Debbie Piacenza**
Debbie opposes this bill due to the unwanted effects some people have due to vaccines.

**Dr. Jason R Jenkins**
Dr. Jenkins testified in opposition of this bill for many reasons. The first, is changing the authorities who authorize the signature does nothing. Secondly, adding clergy to the list is a violation of your rights as a U.S. citizen. Third, parents shouldn’t have to prove their religious beliefs by having clergy authorize the exemption. Fourth, many families choose to utilize the
school nurse to protect their child’s health information. Fifth, the bill may be a step in a progression to remove the religious exemption. Finally, parents have a right to vaccinate their children or not.

**Dr. Andrew Crape**
Dr. Crape is in opposition of this bill. Changing the authorities who authorize the signature does nothing while adding clergy is a violation of the rights if U.S. citizens. Parents should have easy access to a signature from someone who is bound by HIPAA laws.

**LeeAnn Ducat**
LeeAnn is in opposition because adding clergy to the list of signatories is unnecessary. School nurses should be more educated that they are acknowledging the identity of the parent on the form. She also believes that this bill would be against your rights granted in the First Amendment.

**Diane Connors**
Diane testified in opposition stating that it is a parent’s constitutional right on how they raise their children and not the government’s job to mandate that they force vaccines on children.

**Gina Consiglio**
She is in opposition of this bill because it seems like a step in removing the protected religious, parental, and civil rights. The nurse is the most appropriate person to acknowledge the exemption because they have access already to a student’s medical information. Adding clergy to the list can be discriminatory and also uncomfortable for some parents.

**Denise Jenkins-Krom**
She testified in opposition of this bill because removing the school nurse to authorize the signatures and adding clergy to the list will risk the student’s private medical information being shared. She stated that this seems to be the first step in removing the religious exemption, which would violate her First Amendment rights.

**Monica Szymonik**
Monica testified that it is against her religion to have any foreign substances injected into her body. She wants to be able to continue to have follow her religion and this bill infringes on those rights.

**J Patrick Taylor**
He testified that this bill smears the line that keeps church and state separate. He believes that medical history should be a sacred privacy.

**Madison Taylor**
Believes this bill violates the right to freely practice any religion that they choose. It is discriminatory to say that there is a difference between a child who has a medical exemption versus a child with a religious exemption.

**Laura Smith**
Laura testified against this bill as it is opposed to her religious beliefs and rights. Clergy members are speaking to the validity of a person’s spirituality when they sign a religious exemption form, but they do not determine whether those beliefs are valid.
Maria Smith
She testified that this bill should even have been proposed. Does not believe there has been a problem with nurses not wanting to sign the acknowledgement. She believes religious beliefs should not have to be validated by clergy.

Margaret Soto
She believes that this bill goes against her First Amendment right to religious freedom. Margaret stated that States shouldn’t have the ability to override this right.

Mark Joachim
Mark testified in opposition of this bill because the adding of clergy is inappropriate. He states it is a violation of privacy in regard to religious beliefs. The school nurse is the best option for acknowledging the signature because they already have access to the student's medical information. He also stated that many lawmakers have made it clear they wish to eliminate the religious exemption and that this bill is a clear pathway to religious discrimination.

Bitsy K
Bitsy opposes this bill because the removal of the school nurse from acknowledging a parents signature gives them no choice but to share their children’s medical information with other individuals. She stated that adding clergy to the list does not make sense and can be seen as religious discrimination. This bill could eventually lead to the removal of the religious exemption.

Matthew Hogan
Matthew opposes this bill and stated that it takes away his basic U.S rights to choose his child’s healthcare options. This is a violation of his religious freedoms as well.

Jennifer Tetreault
She testified that every citizen has the right to religious and medical choices. This bill infringes upon those rights. The government has no business telling people what to do with their bodies.

Monika Tomaszewski
Monika testified that she was taught that America would provide freedoms and rights for her to escape religious prosecution. She is afraid these rights would be taken away with this bill.

Melissa Tulisano
Melissa believes that parents have an undeniable right to do what they feel is best for their children. Having to obtain approval from a third party in order to get an exemption forces one to reveal private information and believes this bill to be unconstitutional.

Mary Ann Tuska
Mary Ann testified this bill undermines her right to practice religion freely. The situation is made more complicated by eliminating the school nurse and replacing them with clergy members.

Mike U
Mike testified that he would like to see a better solution to protect the rights of people who use the religious exemption correctly.

**Christine Ulicli**
She testified in opposition of this bill. Connecticut has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country and there is no reason to infringe upon the rights of its citizens.

**Dorothy Vecchio**
Dorothy considers this legislation an overstep of the boundaries between church and state. She is disappointed that the legislature would do this when there is no true issue.

**Lia Vencer**
She believes this bill invades a zone of privacy that in enjoyed by a parent or guardian with the right to make all decisions regarding their children’s health.

**Sandra Vonniessen**
Sandra considers this bill part of the slow and steady encroachment on parents’ rights to decide what they want to do with their children. Parents should not be required to adhere to these mandates.

**Chris W**
Chris believes the current law is more than adequate. He stated that adding clergy to the option is very troubling and unnecessary.

**Sarah W**
Sarah testified that that this bill is discriminatory and against the freedom to practice religion. The clergy requirement is troubling because there are some religions without clergy.

**Sarah Wallace**
Even though Sarah has chosen to vaccinate her children she opposes this bill. She believes this encroachment on this right is unnecessary and just another regulation on parents’ rights.

**Diana Waller**
Diana is opposed to eliminating the ability of the nurse to acknowledge a religious exemption. They are simply acknowledging a persons’ religious choice.

**David Wiemer, DMD**
Testified in opposition of this bill because there is no proof that unvaccinated people are a risk to other people.

**Elizabeth Williams**
Elizabeth stated that this bill is in violation of the First Amendment’s guarantee to freedom of choice and religion. Additionally, does not want to share personal information with anyone other than nurses or healthcare professionals.

**Jessica Y**
She believes that this bill directly discriminates against religious people. Adding the clergy requirement is not feasible.
Jamie Matos
Jamie opposes this bill and stated that pharmaceutical vaccines go against moral and religious beliefs. Jamie also said there have been enough attempts to attack religious exemptions across the nation.

Dan Young
Dan stated he has no issues with the current statutes regarding religious exemptions. He believes that adding the clergy member requirement is unnecessary and creates more confusion in the entire process.

Anna Zackiewicz
She states that the different beliefs of the state’s residents must be upheld. Legislators must be respectful of these dissimilarities and uphold everyone’s rights.

Irina Zakharova
She testified that the clergy requirement empowers the church to work on behalf of the state. This is against the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state.

Alex McCarthy
Alex testified that he is extremely concerned about the threat to our parental and religious freedom.

Austin McCaslin
Austin stated that any bill that threatens religious exemptions of vaccines is a direct threat to freedom of religion.

Susan McGuinness Getzinger
Susan opposes any legislation that would restrict a parent’s right to religious vaccine exemptions.

Jaclyn McInerney
She testified she would feel uncomfortable having anyone have to authorize my signature for mine or my future child’s exemption to any vaccination, especially my priest. Also stated as a woman, she has the right to protect her body by choosing whether or not to have a medical procedure done.

Michael McNaught
Michael testified that the protection of religious freedom is one of our most cherished rights, and parents whose religious beliefs do not accommodate mandatory vaccination of their children should not be forced in any way to have those rights abrogated by special interest groups.

Isabelle Menozzi
Isabelle believes No one should have to jump through hoops to exercise right of conscience.

Juliana Messina
Juliana strongly opposes the removal of school nurses from the CT Religious Exemption document. As a mother, she believes parents should continue to have the option to utilize
their school nurse to acknowledge this document to protect their children’s medical information which is very personal and private.

Marija Mikolajczak
Marija believes that this bill doesn’t solve any problems but instead creates a bunch on new ones. This bill is considered an attack on her religious freedoms.

Amy Monticello
Amy does not understand the reasoning behind removing the school nurses from being an acceptable signature. They are the only person allowed to acknowledge that are bound by HIPAA.

Kristine Rabel
Kristine believes the school nurse should stay listed as one of a few people that may acknowledge a parent’s signature on the Religious Exemption form. Many families utilize this option because it minimizes the number of people that need to be made aware of their child’s personal health information.

Christina Ruddy
Christina believes that prohibiting a school nurse from acknowledging a religious exemption is unjustifiable.

Barbara S
Barbara testified that the school nurse is the most logical choice to acknowledge a signature on the form and is bound by HIPAA. Changing this would put the most vulnerable residents in Connecticut at risk.

Gabrielle S
Gabrielle testified that religious beliefs and medical decisions do not go hand in hand.

Gregory S
Gregory testified in opposition of this bill as it contradicts several fundamental constitutional rights afforded every U.S. citizen.

Jennifer Saines
Jennifer believes this bill is unnecessary and lacks sufficient reason to move forward.

Carolyn Salzano
She testified in opposition of this bill and stated that pharmaceutical companies have admitted the negative effects vaccines have caused.

Lindsay Schmitt
Lindsay opposes this legislation and believes it is every parent’s right to make healthcare choices for the child.

Odila Schoenborn
Odila testified that removing the nurses from being able to acknowledge this form removes a medical professional and asks parents to share confidential medical information with non-medical professionals.
Schwartz Family
The Schwartz’ oppose this bill and consider it infringement upon their religious beliefs.

Len Sclanfani, Dr
He testified against this bill stating it blurs the line of separation between church and state. It also adds someone to the list that isn’t bound by HIPAA laws.

Elena Sclanfani
Elena opposes this bill and considers it infringement upon her first amendment rights.

Jennifer Shafer
Jennifer is in opposition of this bill and considers it an attack on her first amendment right to freedom of religion.

Jennifer Sherriff
Jennifer believes a basic fundamental principle of the United States of America is that we have a separation of church and state. This bill would be a serious encroachment of this separation.

Sharon Sherwood
Sharon considers this bill a clear stepping stone to removing the religious exemption. She also believes it blurs the line on the separation of church and state.

Priscila Siano
Priscila believes religion is a private, personal family matter and a clergy should not be involved in their decisions. She also stated asking for a clergy signature is unconstitutional and discriminatory because some religions don't have a clergy. She doesn't see a need to change the current law.

Erich Simo
Erich opposes and considers this bill legislative creep.

Risa Sloves
Risa opposes this bill and considers it clear religious discrimination.

J Smith
J testified against this bill and believes in the freedom of unnecessary government interference.

Jo Smith
Jo opposes this bill.

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