

Respected members of the Joint Committee on Public Health:

I am writing to respectfully OPPOSE HB 5044 eliminating religious exemption for vaccination and setting up an infrastructure to limit medical exemptions.

Removing religious exemptions is unnecessary and unduly discriminatory. Vaccination rates for Connecticut school children are already amongst the highest in the country and exemption numbers are already very low.

Legislative attacks on Vaccine Exemptions for the "benefit" of the immune compromised are unjustified and unnecessary. First, immune compromised people are often vaccinated. Second, vaccinated people of all ages can get infected and transmit to others. Children and teachers interact with many vaccinated and unvaccinated people outside the school setting. It is an illusion that immune compromised children will not be exposed to infections if vaccine exemptions are removed to attain a 99.99 percent vaccination rate in schools.

Setting up a medical contraindication advisory committee is not necessary and a waste of resources. There are only 86 kindergarteners in the whole state with medical exemptions. Setting up a bureaucratic committee to micromanage a physician's professional judgment applied to such a small segment of the population is not only an overreach, but it could be dangerous for a child if a medical exemption is denied or limited.

Personal religious beliefs are included in rights granted by the U.S. and Connecticut Constitutions. There have been unsubstantiated claims that parents in Connecticut are misusing religious exemptions. Those

who are asserting this incorrectly believe that one has to belong to a recognized or organized religion to have constitutionally protected religious beliefs. This is not true. Personally held sincere religious beliefs are protected as well.

Vaccine exemptions need to be expanded and persevered for many vaccines in the future. America's biopharmaceutical research companies are developing more than 260 vaccines. The U.S. Vaccine Market alone was \$36.45 billion in 2018, and is expected to reach \$50.42 billion by 2023. This is a very powerful industry with many resources to lobby and influence policy to remove religious freedoms and parental rights. The industry benefits financially by forced use. Pediatricians are compensated for the amount of vaccines they administer, and the pharmaceutical companies pump billions into the mainstream media to keep the risks and the "real story" from the masses. Anyone who does the research and reads between the lines and follows the "money trail" knows the real story, and it is a terrifying one of the utmost greed.

Vaccines cause injuries and even death, and manufacturers and doctors have NO liability. The United States Government has paid out more than \$4 billion dollars to vaccine victims through the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP). The law passed by Congress in 1986 establishing the VICP along with the 2011 Supreme Court Decision *Bruesewitz et al. v. Wyeth LLC, FKA Wyeth, Inc. et al* shields vaccine manufacturers and the doctors who administer vaccines from liability for vaccine injury and deaths.

When I became pregnant in 2010, I had every intention to vaccinate according to the CDC recommendations. I trusted the medical model

and my pediatrician blindly, until a friend urged me to at the very least, do my "homework." Researching vaccine safety became a second job to me. By day I worked full-time as a high school psychologist, and by night I began reviewing the research on vaccines that medical schools never, ever taught. What I learned was appalling, and eventually led to the decision to not vaccinate my child at all. My daughter is almost 9. She has never received a single vaccine. She has never had the flu, an ear infection, bronchitis, Croup, a sinus infection, etc. She is the epitome of health and that claim is substantiated every year at her well visit. If this bill passes, my daughter and many others would be forced to be home schooled, creating financial strain on many school districts not to mention the workforce, as many parents will be forced to leave their jobs to teach their children full-time.

Even if the issues of vaccine safety do not interest you, consider the issue of the government having the right to dictate what poison is injected into your child, whether you agree or not. If this does not infuriate you as a citizen of the United States in 2020, I'm not sure what will.

I respectfully ask that you vehemently OPPOSE HB 5044.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Malkin

North Branford, CT