Testimony for the Public Health Committee

In support of H.B. No. 5044 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING IMMUNIZATIONS

Good morning Rep. Steinberg, Sen. Daugherty Abrams, Sen. Anwar, Se. Lesser, Rep. Young, Sen. Somers, Rep. Petit, Rep. Cook, Rep. Demicco, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is Janine Sullivan-Wiley and I am submitting testimony **IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 5044**, and in support of all children getting appropriate immunizations except where a medical exemption is warranted. **I support this legislation, speaking as a mother of two children and grandmother of four. All of them immunized.**

My rationale:
While I recognize that getting appropriate immunizations can and does pose some risk to some children, this is a clear case where the cost-benefit analysis clearly comes down on the side of the need for all who are medically able to get immunized against the preventable diseases covered by this bill.

I understand that some parents don't want their children to get immunized because they don't accept that personal risk. But that also relies on other children being immunized so that their child has reduced risk. An increasing number of parents have used a "religious" exemption as the basis for that refusal. If this is a parent that refuses ALL medical treatment on the grounds of a religious belief, that might make more sense. But that is not the case.

Consider the current and mounting crisis of the Covid-19 virus, and its potential as a pandemic. Why can this disease spread so rapidly and with such intensity? *There is no vaccine for it.* Those diseases for which there is a vaccine, and that vaccine is used as a public health measure, can be stopped – or as in the case of smallpox, eradicated.

I have seen first-hand what measles can do to a child, even when it is not fatal. Chicken-pox can blind. That vaccine came out after my children got the disease. We had anxious days waiting to see if their infection would spread to their retinas. I am happy that my grandchildren were able to get the vaccine to save them from that potential adverse outcome.

Children in a school create an environment that is perfect for the spread of disease.

Please do all that you can to assure – through mandatory vaccines - that their environment is kept free of those diseases which are preventable.