

SENATOR ROB SAMPSON
SIXTEENTH DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
300 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 3400
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Capitol: (860) 240-8843
Toll Free: (800) 842-1421
E-mail: rob.sampson@cga.ct.gov
Website: senatorsampson.com



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ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
HOUSING COMMITTEE
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Testimony
Sen. Rob Sampson
Public Health Committee
March 11, 2026

Opposition:
H.B. 5044: An Act Establishing Connecticut Vaccine Standards

Co-Chairs Anwar and McCarthy Vahey, Vice-Chairs Belton, Marx, and McCrory, Ranking Members Somers and Klarides-Ditria, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

I am submitting testimony in opposition to H.B. 5044.

The committee is also considering S.B. 450 today, which advances essentially the same concept. That proposal raises many of the same concerns, but H.B. 5044 goes even further by weaving this approach throughout numerous sections of Connecticut law.

At the heart of this bill is a very simple but very powerful change. The Commissioner of Public Health would be authorized to establish what the state calls the “standard of care for immunization” and then revise that standard whenever the commissioner decides it should change.

That single determination would then influence vaccination policy across large portions of Connecticut law including schools, colleges, health care providers, insurance coverage and various state vaccination programs.

So let’s talk plainly about what that means.

One government official defines the standard, posts it online, and that standard then becomes the framework that guides vaccination policy across the state.

That is a tremendous amount of authority to place in the hands of a single administrative office.

Normally when statewide standards are created they go through the regulatory process. That process exists for a reason. It allows transparency, public input and legislative oversight before policies that affect millions of residents take effect.

This bill deliberately avoids that process.

Instead, the commissioner establishes the standard and publishes it online, and that standard can then guide policy across multiple areas of Connecticut law.

Regardless of where someone stands on vaccines themselves, that should make people pause. Major public health standards should not be created or revised without meaningful public oversight.

But there is also a broader issue here that should not be ignored.

Over the last several years I have seen a troubling pattern develop in Connecticut where state policy increasingly pressures and marginalizes people who question or dissent from prevailing medical policy.

I hear from constituents all the time who feel that if they ask questions, raise concerns, or simply want to make different medical decisions for themselves or their children, they are treated as a problem that government needs to control.

Frankly, I see that attitude reflected in some of the policies coming out of this building as well.

Many residents have begun to feel like the message from Hartford is simple. If you do not agree with the state's preferred medical choices, then maybe Connecticut is not the place for you.

That attitude is beyond the pale.

In a constitutional republic, government does not bully people into compliance on deeply personal medical decisions.

Medical decisions are among the most personal decisions individuals and families make. Those decisions should come from conversations between patients and doctors, not from an evolving administrative standard that can be changed without public input.

Public health policy works best when it respects both sound medical guidance and the fundamental liberty of individuals to make informed decisions about their own care.

H.B. 5044 moves Connecticut further away from that balance.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to reject this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Sampson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rob Sampson
State Senator - 16th District