

Dear Legislators,

My name is Andrew and I am 12 years old. I am currently in 6th grade. I like going to school because it provides me with challenges. Without those challenges, I would not be able to learn. I get to see my friends that I enjoy spending time with. I ran cross country and I enjoyed a STEM coding club this year.

If you take away the religious exemption to vaccines, I will not be able to go to school. I am not vaccinated and my family has religious objections to vaccines. I consider myself extremely healthy. I have learned that I can keep myself healthy by eating right and staying active. In my school, most of the kids are vaccinated. I am in the minority as an unvaccinated kid. This year, over 30 kids in my school had the flu at the same time. However, I have never had the flu but have watched other kids around me continue to get sick with the flu, asthma, and allergies. I have no allergies and the worst illness I've ever had is the common cold.

I know there are exemptions for religious beliefs and medical reasons. I am no different than a kid who is exempt for medical reasons. I am just as much of a risk of sharing viruses as them, except we both can't share what we don't have, which means we both have no risk.

My mom tells me that you want to know about our religion. We are Christians who have deep faith in following what God wants for us and our direction comes from the Bible. I also know that by the Constitution, the government can't judge my religion and should not discriminate against my religious beliefs.

I ask you to keep the religious exemption since students like me are not a risk to other students in public schools.

Thank you,
Andrew O.