

I am writing to voice my concern over the potential removal of the religious exemption for vaccines. Not only is it unconstitutional, but it is also discriminatory. We have the freedom of religion, and we have the freedom of choice when it comes to medical decisions. We must retain the right to choose. Where there is risk - and there is a plethora of documented risks associated with vaccinations - there must be choice.

Measles is a relatively benign disease, and usually resolves itself without complications. There are no active measles cases in CT at the moment, and our overall immunization rates are very high, among the highest in the nation. The average death from measles in the entire United States is ONE death annually. Removing a constitutional right to religious freedom seems a disproportionate response.

Our overall vaccination rates are very high in the state of CT. Most schools that have lower rates in a recent report are small private schools, or the numbers are skewed because even opting out of the flu vaccine means that the child is counted among the exempt. We do not need to remove the exemption in order to maintain the health of our children; they are remarkably well already.

Thank you for your time.

Casey Russo
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