

Dear Members of the Children's Committee,

I am providing testimony today to ask you to oppose any motions to remove the State Religious Exemption to Children's Immunizations. My understanding is that today's meeting is informational and not a public hearing and that no specific bill is being discussed. Any changes to existing laws or proposed bills should go through the proper legislative due process.

The state school vaccination rate is 98.5%. This data was further dissected at the school level and released by the Department of Public Health on May 3rd of this year. Inaccuracies were found and corrected data was released on May 10th. It seems that we still do not have a clear picture of what the correct data is. As reported by WFSB Eyewitness News on May 10th, "In August, the Department of Public Health is going to be putting out a video to show school nurses the correct process of how and what numbers are to be included, so that everyone is on the same page."

Herd immunity is purported to exist when 95% of a community has immunity from disease, whether it be through vaccination or from having contracted the disease. The idea that herd immunity is being threatened by rising vaccination exemptions is flawed. There are 3.5 million people in CT of which 1/2 million are children. Roughly 1/7th of the CT population is included in the exemption data discussed in the previous paragraph. What about the remaining 6/7ths of the population? Are adults vaccinated according to any schedule? While I may have received vaccinations as a child, I certainly didn't receive all 72 doses currently recommended by the CDC. As there is no data tracking adult vaccination status, herd immunity cannot be used as factual evidence for the lack of any outbreaks in our state.

Your concerns about immunocompromised children are understood. As a mother of two boys with complicated medical, neurological and psychological issues, I sympathize with any parent having to deal with childhood illness. However, I disagree with the statement that a healthy unvaccinated child is a threat to an immunocompromised child. Healthy children simply cannot spread illness they do not have. Severely immunocompromised children are not attending schools as they need to be sheltered from all illness, not just those purported to be prevented by vaccines. Physicians for Informed Consent has published a comprehensive statement on immunocompromised children, including a discussion of why the vaccination status of other schoolchildren is not a significant risk to immunocompromised schoolchildren. I am including it in my testimony today.

To date, there have been 3 reported measles cases in CT, all of which have been in adults and all of which have survived. According to the CDC, medical care for measles is supportive and to help relieve symptoms.

We have no health crisis in CT. There have been no outbreaks in our state. Herd immunity is a myth and healthy unvaccinated children are not a threat to immunocompromised children. Please protect our state's religious exemption and oppose any motion to remove it.

Catherine A

Fairfield County, CT

https://www.wfsb.com/news/ct-health-officials-release-new-list-of-vaccine-rates-at/article_9e518640-7327-11e9-b2db-ab1bcb9b59e3.html?fbclid=IwAR2a1ju72cM_fhcQkzHyQmijMVY_YBGhpl0O3x7ukvgjIsFUGnF7UFJe6v0

<https://physiciansforinformedconsent.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Immunocompromised-Schoolchildren-RGIS.pdf>