

Dear legislators – My name is Dan from Fairfield county. I **OPPOSE** the removal of the Religious Exemption.

I have 2 young children, and my wife and I are expecting our third child this September. What should be a very exciting and joyous time in our lives, has been overshadowed by the stress of our family being split apart if you chose to remove the religious exemption.

My wife suffers from Multiple Sclerosis, a neurodegenerative autoimmune disease. She is an amazing mother, but her disease causes her extreme fatigue and all of her energy goes into taking care of our children's basic needs. Unfortunately, we do not have family close by to help out, and homeschooling is not an option due to my wife's disability. I would have no choice but to move my family out of the state so that my children can attend school while I remain here in Connecticut to be able to provide for them financially. I fear that the stress of this entire situation will cause my wife to suffer a severe relapse, leaving her unable to care for our children at all.

I have repeatedly heard some legislators talk about how the unvaccinated are a threat to the immunocompromised. This argument is severely flawed. In 2017 my wife underwent a stem cell transplant which involved high dose chemotherapy. In her discharge paperwork, she was told to "avoid contact with any individual who has had a recent live vaccine for 6 months." The reason for this is that live vaccines (i.e. MMR, chicken pox, nasal flu shot, etc.) can shed the virus to others. I have attached this paperwork to my testimony. Please note there is no mention that my wife should avoid contact with an unvaccinated child or that such child poses a risk to her health.

Finally, I was concerned when I learned that House Majority Leader Matthew Ritter's father is a paid lobbyist for Big Pharma¹. I assumed major Conflicts of Interest would not interfere with legislation, but Matthew Ritter has been spear-heading the push to remove the Religious Exemption when we do not have a health crisis in our state.

I called the CT Dept. of Health on Friday, and the epidemiologist informed me that the immunization data is a "health concern and is not an emergency or crisis." I am confused why Ritter is racing to pass an emergency bill for something that is just a health concern by DPH. This whole thing reminds me of when Trump tried to declare a fictional crisis at the border in order to fulfill his agenda to build the wall. We don't have an emergency.

I stand with the others here who are on the side of America's long history of protecting religious freedom. Back in the day, all sorts of religious groups came here fleeing persecution and oppression. Now, in 2019, people who don't buy into the religion of Big Pharma are the ones being persecuted. If the right to life, liberty, and happiness does not include the right to decide what kind of healthcare your kids get, then the Declaration of Independence is not worth the paper it was written on.

¹ David Sirota, Lydia O'Neal, and Josh Keefe, "Why Are Drug Prices Going Up? Democratic Power Players Help Pharmaceutical Industry in Connecticut Battle," International Business Times. <https://www.ibtimes.com/political-capital/why-are-drug-prices-going-democratic-power-players-help-pharmaceutical-industry>.

I ask you to please pump the breaks on this, so families won't have to leave our state.

Sincerely,
Dan
Fairfield County

Discharge Summary

* Final Report *

Result type: Discharge Summary
Result date: 31 July 2017 10:16
Result status: Authenticated
Result title: SCT Discharge Summary
Performed by: [REDACTED] on 31 July 2017 10:30
Verified by: [REDACTED] 1 July 2017 16:32
Encounter info: [REDACTED], Special (Specimen Admit and Corporate), 6/27/2017 -

* Final Report *

SCT Discharge Summary

Patient: [REDACTED] MRN: [REDACTED]
Age: [REDACTED] Sex: [REDACTED] DOB: [REDACTED]
Associated Diagnoses: None
Author: [REDACTED]
Attachments: None

Discharge Information

Admission Date: 7/13/2017

Discharge Date: 7/27/2017

Discharge Diagnoses:

Multiple Sclerosis, Autologous Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant

Discharge Attending: [REDACTED]

Chief Complaint/ Reason for Hospitalization:

Admitted for Autologous Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant

Disease: Multiple Sclerosis
[REDACTED]

Home Care:

For 3 months, avoid taking out the garbage if possible. If cannot be avoided, wash your hands after disposing garbage.

For 6 months, avoid construction sites (remodeling in homes).

Gardening/Yard Work:

For 3 months, avoid yard work and gardening. Avoid contact with soils, mulch and dirt.

Vaccines: If you would like, you may ask your PCP to have your vaccine titers checked after 1 year. It is okay to get a flu shot 6 months after transplant, but **DO NOT** get any live vaccinations. Also, avoid contact with any individual who has had a recent live vaccination for 6 months

Printed by: [REDACTED]
Printed on: 8/1/2017 13:29

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Discharge Summary

* Final Report *

Live Vaccines: Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR combined vaccine), Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV, chicken pox),
Influenza (nasal spray), Rotavirus
Titers: MMR, VZV, Hep B