

My name is Janice Pena and I am in *opposition of HB 7005 and HB 7222*, and I would (along with many other parents) like these bills voted ***NO, OPPOSED and NIXED***. HB 7222, Attorney General William Tong's bill proposing the creation of a civil rights division within the Attorney General's office. I am very ***DISTRESSED AND DISPLEASED*** with the AG's decision not to defend religious freedom with regard to the religious exemption to mandatory vaccination. The removal of religious exemptions is archaic, backwards and unconstitutional.

1) Attorney General Tong purports to be the champion of civil rights, but has no problem trampling on religious freedoms protected by the First Amendment.

2) Attorney General Tong did not have the decency or respect to respond to the letter submitted to him by 44 legislators.

3) In his response to Representative Ritter, the Attorney General did not address the legislators' concerns that eliminating the religious exemption would violate Connecticut's nondiscrimination statutes.

4) In his response to Representative Ritter, Attorney General Tong expressed a viewpoint reminiscent of the "separate but equal" doctrine that was abolished long ago by the US Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education. It is discriminatory for him to suggest that children with exemptions will not be deprived of their right to an education simply because they can be home schooled. Segregation is never equality.

5) Attorney General Tong issued his opinion supporting the legality of Representative Ritter's proposal to eliminate the religious exemption just hours before the House placed the AG's flagship legislation, HB 7222, on its go list for a vote! Ironically, this bill seeks to create a civil rights division within the AG's office. This stinks of a quid pro quo and we are asking our legislators to vote no on HB 7222. We already have a state agency to enforce civil rights, and Mr. Tong has shown himself incapable of defending them.

PLEASE VOTE NO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Sincerely,  
Janice Pena