

May 13, 2019

Esteemed legislators,

I am writing in opposition to removing the religious exemption.

Please Do The Research: If you, as a parent, decide to trust your pediatrician, the CDC, and FDA without researching the other side of vaccines, that's your right. But, as a legislator, it would be negligent and disrespectful to not do this research prior to making a decision that will affect the entire state.

I know you typically rely on expert testimony, and testimony of constituents as well. But this topic is a very complicated one, with lots of bias on both sides. It is imperative that each legislator dig through the weeds and come to their own conclusion; not based on what influential people tell you to believe, but what you conclude based on weighing all of the evidence you find.

By researching vaccines, I'm not talking about just reading the CDC website, listening to the media, or asking your pediatrician for their advice. Which of course, you could still do. I'm talking about tens, to hundreds, to thousands of hours of research - reading clinical trials, epidemiologic studies, books, watching documentaries, listening to podcasts. If you do not plan to do the research, then please do not take legislative action in this area.

I think documentaries are the most powerful way to get someone engaged, so please, watch Vaxxed and The Greater Good, and then go from there. If you think watching these documentaries will be a waste of time, I assure you it won't be. Regardless of your conclusion after watching them, you will better understand where many of us are coming from, and then we can have more meaningful conversations around this in the future. We would so greatly appreciate this attempt to connect with our cause. We would be more willing to hear your perspective and figure out something that will work for all of us.

The Benefits of Doing the Research: I know, you don't want to do this research. I know you don't want to be us. You want so badly to believe in vaccines, and trust the medical establishment. You don't want to be labeled an anti-vaxxer and be shunned from friends or family, and you don't want to risk re-election. And most of all, you don't want to think about the possibility that you might have harmed your child by vaccinating them. Yes, this is very heavy stuff. But not one of us regret our decision to do the research.

Plenty of people have transitioned from pro-vaccine to vaccine hesitant, but we don't know anyone who moves in the other direction. This is a growing movement, and you are attempting to stop it by blunt force which will only hurt everyone involved. Connect with us. If you think we are wrong, please show us the evidence you have and let's have a conversation around it. We are open-minded to what you have to say, but we just need conversation, and for you to do your part....the research.

Recommendation: On a related note, please make the medical exemption more accessible to people. You talk about protecting the health of the immune-compromised, but what about us families who were doing the "right" thing, suffered vaccine injuries, and now can't find a doctor who's willing to write us a medical exemption (even though they agree our children should never be vaccinated again)? These doctors fear they will become a target and risk losing their license. We did everything "right". We sacrificed our child "for the greater good" just like a "good" US citizen is supposed to. But now you are considering punishing our daughter even more by denying her ability to go to school (because of course

we will not continue to sacrifice her with more vaccines). I understand your desire to protect the immunocompromised, and we can do that by looking at the root cause of why they are immune compromised in the first place. Vaccines are a dangerous shortcut when it comes to protecting the immune-compromised. They are at best, a band-aid, but at worst, one of the causes of their immune problems.

Common Goal: I truly believe you are all good people that want the best for our children. So I think we can all agree then that measles is a narrow view - just a very small part of that, and the bigger picture is actually the overall health of our children. We need to look at the big picture. We've traded acute infections for chronic ones (e.g. childhood diabetes, obesity, asthma, allergies, autism, etc.), and I believe we can work together to be a leader in improving our children's health in this country.

Short Bio: I am a stay-at-home mom in Darien, with a 3-year old daughter and a husband who shares my passion on this topic (you can see his testimony under Ian Cadieu). I have a master's degree in Public Health with a concentration in biostatistics and epidemiology, and worked in biotech and pharma for ten years in which I supported their drug safety departments and managed their adverse event reporting system (AERS). In the public health field, the most important thing I learned is that it's incredibly easy to design a study to produce the results that you're looking for, whether it be consciously or subconsciously. While we can look to studies for information, more importantly we must trust our intuition and what our heart tells us. When that nurse was holding down my 2-month old daughter against her will, while my daughter bawled uncontrollably as they injected her with those vaccines, my heart felt dark, it felt absolutely terrible. My heart told me everything I needed to know, and that's what we need to trust. Our instincts do not fail us.

Sincerely,
Jessica Cadieu
Darien, CT