

I would like to start off by thanking the Legislatures who are supporting our cause. I would also like to note that I am writing this testimony based on reports of a bill being proposed to remove the Religious Exemption for vaccinations. Unfortunately, an actual bill has not yet been released for the public to review, this is a concern to myself and many families.

I do not consider myself a pro- or anti-vaccine believer. I believe and support parental choice and informed consent. The bill that we are expecting to be proposed, to remove the Religious Exemption for vaccinations, strips parents from their ability to exercise their religious beliefs. What I know of the potential bill is that Rep. Matthew Ritter's intent is to deny a public education to a child who utilizes a Religious Exemption. My daughter loves going to school, she is eager to learn. It's absolutely beautiful to see her excitement each day as we getting ready for school in the mornings. She adores her friends and her teacher. I cannot imagine living in a State where my family's religious beliefs could obstruct her right to a public education. That is unconstitutional and discriminatory.

Just like most families in CT, we are a two-income household. The removal of a Religious Exemption would put a burden on approximately 1,200 families who utilize the Religious Exemption. If you deny our children public education, what choices do we have? For two-income households, home schooling is not an option. The cost of private schools is out of reach for most middle class working families like mine.

The recent data released from the Department of Public Health is disappointing. The mistakes made in the reporting have created a false sense of fear amongst parents and communities. There is no health crisis in CT. The Religious Exemption that families utilize works, why change it?

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