

Dear Children's Committee Members,

I am a Connecticut parent, writing to you today with grave concern regarding an emergency bill or any other vehicle that seeks to remove our religious exemptions for immunizations.

First, I must ask – what emergency is so dire that infringing upon our religious freedoms must take place without due legislative process? The only rationale I've heard is the three adult measles cases in CT this year* (following 3 cases total in 2018). In a population of over 3.5 million people**, that equates to .0001% of the population contracting an illness with no lingering ill effects. This hardly qualifies as any reasonable justification to strip people of their rights. There is no health emergency and there is no reason to remove the religious exemption.

Any bill that allows the state to keep healthy, unvaccinated children from a public education should be rejected. Anyone who is truly immunocompromised will not be attending public school. The current exemptions are fine as they stand with the religious exemption being used by only 2% of the kindergarteners in 2018.*** Since we have no health crisis, one wonders what is driving this emergency bill.

Additionally, as a tax paying resident and business owner whose children will not get the benefit of a public education if a bill removing the religious exemptions are passed, will you be championing the effort to have my tax dollars refunded? I will certainly need it as I cannot afford to homeschool and run a new business successfully. Removing the exemptions will create unnecessary hardship and upheaval for many families.

I think we can all agree that protecting children is a priority, but we must do our due diligence in reviewing all viewpoints; there is no imminent danger. From the science perspective, not all doctors agree that immunizations are safe and effective. There are no long-term studies on the safety and efficacy of vaccines, especially ones that use a true placebo vs one made of adjuvants. We should be requiring agencies to be accountable in providing independent, double blind placebo studies, and unbiased scientific data from experts on both side of the debate before making any decisions regarding immunizations. And as always, people should have a choice regarding medical and religious decisions for themselves and their families. You can be a proponent of both immunizations AND religious freedom. The two do not need to be (nor should they be) mutually exclusive.

I urge you to vote down any bill that seeks to remove or further restrict our religious exemption to immunizations.

* <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Press-Room/Press-Releases---2019/DPH-Confirms-Third-Case-of-Measles-in-Connecticut-for-2019>

** https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/Population/ASRH/2017_State-level_ASRH.xlsx?la=en

*** <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Immunizations/School-Survey>

Respectfully,
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Danbury, CT