

Moorish Holy Temple of Science of the World
Free and Sundry Moorish Science Temple of America
Conn. S.O.T.S. File #0003767681

TO: PHtestimony@cga.ct.gov

SUBJECT: Oppose HB-5044

We, as a small religious community, do oppose HB-5044. The CONNECTICUT CONSTITUTION guarantees freedom of religion;

ARTICLE FIRST. SEC. 3 *The **exercise and enjoyment** of religious profession and worship, **without discrimination**, shall **forever be free** to all persons in the state; provided, that the right hereby declared and established, shall not be so construed as to excuse **acts of licentiousness**, or to justify practices inconsistent with the **peace and safety of the state**.*,

ARTICLE SEVENTH. *It being the **right of all men** to worship the Supreme Being, the Great Creator and Preserver of the Universe, and to render that worship in a mode **consistent with the dictates of their consciences**, no person shall by law be **compelled** to join or support, nor be classed or associated with, any congregation, church or religious association. No preference shall be given by law to any religious society or denomination in the state. Each shall have and enjoy the same and equal powers, rights and privileges, and may support and maintain the ministers or teachers of its society or denomination, and may build and repair houses for public worship. and a free and equal education for all children,*

ARTICLE EIGHTH. SEC. 1. *There shall always be **free public elementary and secondary schools in the state**. The general assembly shall implement this principle by appropriate legislation...*

You may be surprised to learn that some vaccinations are derived from aborted fetal tissue. Yes. Vaccines for chicken pox, Hepatitis-A, and Rubella, which are produced solely from aborted fetal tissue, do not even have alternative, ethical versions. Even most physicians who oppose abortion do not realize that these three vaccines are made from aborted fetal tissue. This goes diametrically against our belief that no life should be "aborted". Let alone used as an agent to be injected into the "temple of God". For these reasons, we object to such practices based on religious grounds.

According to 42 USC 2000bb 1 – 4 (Federal Law), government shall not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability. It may only do so if it demonstrates that application of the burden to the person — (1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and (2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest. The burden of proof then falls on the State government.

Connecticut General Statutes 52 - 571b - Action or defense authorized when state or political subdivision burdens a person's exercise of religion – makes it clear that *the state or any political subdivision of the state shall not burden a person's exercise of religion under section 3 of article first of the constitution of the state even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability. The only exception to this rule of law is if it(the state or any political subdivision) demonstrates that application of*

the burden to the person (1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest, and (2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.

The State of Connecticut has not proven a compelling government interest in removing the religious exemption with empirical evidence. The State of Connecticut has failed to apply the least restrictive means to meet this interest. There are already measures in place to protect Connecticut citizens in the event of an outbreak or epidemic that do not include stripping parental and religious rights and removing healthy children from school.

Furthermore, the removal of any form of religious exemption by the State of Connecticut, guaranteed to the people, would be a violation of ARTICLE FIRST. SEC. 16. by doing away with one of the citizenry fundamental means for redress of grievance;

"The citizens have a right... to apply to those invested with the powers of government, for redress of grievances, or other proper purposes, by petition, address or remonstrance.

The right to petition government for redress of grievances is the right to make a complaint to, or seek the assistance of, one's government, without fear of punishment or reprisals. Doing away with religious exemptions for vaccines along with barring the child from the school, without compelling interest and by the least restrictive means, which has yet to be proven. Is akin to punishment and reprisals.

What about those that cannot afford health insurance for or cover the cost of vaccinations? Will they have their economic financial status used against them as a means to bar their children from receiving a free and equal education.

The death rate from infectious diseases has dropped from 800 out of every 100,000 in 1900 to 46 out of every 100,000 people in 2014. Which means that the perceived threat of death around infectious disease is less of a public health issue than annual death rates from guns. Which was 33,636 in 2013 and 39,773 in 2017. The highest rate since 1968. With this logic, why hasn't there been legislation passed that mandates all "gun owners" turn over their "firearms"? There is less of a threat to public safety behind deaths caused by infectious diseases than from gun violence. Yet we the people are being mandated by the very government that we invested power in, to waive our right to not be subjected to something that is proven to have harmful outcomes at least some of the time. Meaning it in and of itself is not 100% "full proof". Even with the risk of an adverse reaction or even still contracting the disease, how is it fair that the government force those who have and have had objections to vaccinations to outright and arbitrarily waive that right and without consent participate in the very act that is not proven 100% to be effective anyway.

In addition there are no proven cases where non vaccinated communities or people have infected already vaccinated groups. There is also no correlation between the effect of total population immunization and decreased chance of contracting the infectious disease. Meaning, there is no data that shows that if unvaccinated people get vaccinated that that too would decrease the likelihood of contracting the disease like a "booster" is said to do.

In St. Louis County, Missouri, a county law required food handlers to obtain the Hepatitis-A vaccine as a prerequisite for employment. Several prominent Catholic newspapers published articles on the morality of using the vaccine and pointed out that the vaccine was derived from aborted fetal tissue. After the information became public, more and more physicians and parents have become deeply troubled by the ethical issues involved in the Hepatitis-A vaccine.

On July 1 2020, HB5044 will eliminate religious exemption for all Connecticut school children and mandate vaccinations for public and or private schools. It will also provide no exemption for students on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Most of whom have special needs. HB-5044 will also create an “advisory council” within the Dept. of Public Health, that will be able to inspect medical exemptions, violating the doctor-patient confidentiality. It will also give the DPH Commissioner the power to add more vaccines to the schedule in the future by amending the regulations without going through the legislative process. HB5044 will also add the chickenpox, measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccines to the list of required immunizations for college students. Additionally, it requires school level immunization data to be released annually.

As you can see, this bill clearly violates (among other laws):

- 1) The First Amendment’s Free Exercise of Religion Clause: Punishes students who choose to exercise their sincerely held religious objection to one or more vaccinations.
- 2) The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment: Denies children who choose not to receive one or more vaccinations equal protection of the law, by refusing them their fundamental right to an education.
- 3) CONN. CONSTITUTION - Article Eighth: Denies children their fundamental right to a public education as expressed in this article and recognized by the CT Supreme Court. See *Sheff v. O’Neill*, 238 Conn. 1, 21 (1996): “Our Connecticut constitution ... contains a fundamental right to education and a corresponding affirmative state obligation to implement and maintain that right.”
- 4) Federal Statutes Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): All schools receiving federal funds for special education are required to provide all students on an IEP with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: Makes it illegal to deny any person entry to a place of public accommodation (like a school) on the basis of religion.
- 5) CT Statutes Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-15c: “[t]he public schools shall be open to all children five years of age and over ... without discrimination on account of ... religion.” Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46a-64: illegal to deny anyone “full and equal accommodations in any place of public accommodation” (including schools) on the basis of “creed,” or “to discriminate, segregate or separate on account of . . . creed.”

If this legislation is passed, it will deny thousands of healthy children the right to equal protection and public education. It will also discriminate and segregate them on the grounds of their religious beliefs. According to the CT Constitution, this is a violation of Art. VIII Sec. 1 (cited above) and;

Art. I Sec. 20 (amended in 1984. See Art. XXI of the Amendments to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut). *No person shall be denied the equal protection of the law nor be subjected to segregation or discrimination in the exercise or enjoyment of his or her civil or political rights because of religion, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex or physical or mental disability.*

If public safety seems to be the rallying cry to push this bill through, then take this into consideration that according to studies, *“the rise in religious exemptions since 2003 has not had an impact on decreasing measles, mumps and rubella cases in CT. Those that exercise their religious freedom to not vaccinate are therefore not a public health threat”.*

Furthermore, *“the CDC acknowledges that one dose of the MMR vaccine leaves 22% of mumps, 7% of measles and 3% of rubella recipients unprotected. A second booster does slightly improved antibody response to 12% for measles and 3% for mumps. This shows that even with 100% vaccination coverage, there will still be outbreaks within fully vaccinated populations.*

Studies also show that *“vaccines wane anywhere between 2 to 10 years after inoculation. Outbreaks of measles and mumps have occurred in fully vaccinated young adult populations with close contact settings, such as universities. Mathematical models of one such study confirms that waning immunity to the vaccine is the central role in the re-emergence of mumps in the U.S.”.*

No child or group in CT has ever been denied access to public school based on beliefs, until now. Again, to deny public school because of a person’s set of beliefs or ideas violates the Art . I Sec. 20 of the CT Constitution. Some families hold to the philosophical or religious belief that vaccination is a complex medical treatment that should be individualized or isn’t right for their children. This is their creed, and the State of Connecticut gives creed the same weight as race and national origin.

The law prohibits a public school from requiring a student to attend a particular school because of his race, creed, or color. This means that the public school system cannot insist a child attend a particular school based on creed, which includes forced homeschooling, just as this cannot be done because of race or skin color.

Discrimination in education based on sex, ethnicity, race, national origin, religion, and mental or physical disability is illegal and unlawful. Children cannot be denied admission to public school based on their religious beliefs or practices. Some citizens have religious objections to particular vaccines because of certain ingredients such as aborted fetal tissue. Additionally, some religions, like Christian Science, do not utilize traditional medicine or obtain vaccinations; instead, they rely on faith-based healing, as is their right to freely practice their religious beliefs.

Laws which remove children from school based on personal, medical, or religious beliefs violate the peoples’ constitutional and educational rights.

Currently, according to the CDC, less than 1% of U.S. children are completely unvaccinated. For this reason, the risk of large disease outbreaks is NOT a realistic threat to Americans. And in the event of an outbreak, instead of mandatory vaccination for everyone, quarantine and targeted vaccination (if

necessary) is a more effective, appropriate, and adequate response that safeguards public health.

Sources: *CDC: Reported Cases and Deaths from Vaccine Preventable Diseases, United States, 1950-2011.*, *Vital Statistics Rates in the United States 1940-1960 – Online database*, *California Department of Public Health Statistics, 2014*, *CDC National Immunization Survey, 2014*.

Vaccination has always been a medical decision made by each individual under the guidance of their personal physician, as have all aspects of health care in America. Until now, only two states – Mississippi and West Virginia – had mandatory vaccine laws where medical choice was removed from parents (they also rank among the least healthy states in the nation – West Virginia is 44th, and Mississippi is LAST).

It is unethical to force any medical treatment or procedure on any individual if that treatment has side effects. About 30,000 vaccine reactions are reported to the CDC every year. Patients must be able to give consent. Medical Decisions Should Be Made by Doctors and Patients, Not Paid Politicians. Our elected officials receive donations from pharmaceutical companies, and then pass laws which promote or mandate medical treatments. We have the right to support legislators who do not pass laws which support their financial sponsors and instead leave medical care decisions to you and your family.

Government-mandated medical treatments are an over-reach of police power. Again, for a government to step in and mandate a treatment in the interest of public health and safety without violating the Constitution, it must show a compelling state interest, and it must be narrowly tailored to follow the least restrictive path possible. In other words, there must be a significant danger, and the solution must be directly targeted at that danger. Mandating vaccination is an abusive overreach of power and is unconstitutional.

It is a fact that all vaccines come with a risk. It requires parents be HONESTLY informed of both the side effects and benefits before making a decision that works for their family.

This risk that comes with vaccines and immunizations has been proven through various studies to adversely and disproportionately affect "African American" communities than other demographics and counterparts. The CDC is said to have done a study comparing cases and controls receiving their first MMR vaccine before and after 36 months of age, there was a statistically significant increase in autism cases specifically among African American males who received the first MMR prior to 36 months of age. Relative risks for males in general and African American males were 1.69 ($p=0.0138$) and 3.36 ($p=0.0019$), respectively.

The present study provides new epidemiologic evidence showing that African American males receiving the MMR vaccine prior to 24 months of age or 36 months of age are more likely to receive an autism diagnosis.

It has been estimated that as many as 62% of children with autism experience a period of regression during early childhood, characterized by loss of previously acquired skills. This period has been reported as ranging between 6 and 36 months of age with the typical age of regression between 18 and 24 months. This period of regression occurs within the same time period that children in the United States typically receive their required vaccinations and thus there have been many studies regarding the

incidence of autism and the receipt of specific vaccines. One of the primary concerns has been the timing of the administration of the first measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine.

A growing body of evidence shows African Americans have a stronger immune response – which increases risk of vaccine injury. The Mayo clinic found a 2X higher vaccine response in African Americans. In 2014 Dr. Gregory Poland said, “maybe we only have to give African Americans half the size dose that we give to Caucasians... [I]f you only need half as much vaccine to reach the same level of protection, we’re adding cost and potentially risk by giving you double what you actually need.” Based on this information alone, and the link to the adverse risk of vaccines to African Americans, there should at least be an option from exemption from immunization for African Americans, if no other group. Again, based on the data above.

The Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health. Part A, Hepatitis B Vaccination of Male Neonates and Autism Diagnosis, NHIS 1997 – 2020 by Carolyn Gallagher and Melody Goodman stated, “Nonwhite boys had 64% higher risk of autism than Caucasian boys” Nonwhite children bear a greater risk than white children when it come to the link between autism and vaccines.

A study in *Pediatrics* showed a 52% increased risk of severe autism for US born black people and a 163% increased risk of severe autism among foreign born black people as compared to US born whites. Let us not forget about the Tuskegee Syphilis experience.

This is further confirmed by the Atlanta Public Schools, which stated, “Black students are 3.5 times more likely as all other student groups to be identified as having an intellectual disorder. They are 3.82 times more likely to be identified with an emotional and behavioral disorder, according to the state.” This is not presented in this way however. The narrative states that the child suffers from this due to some sort of at home parental neglect. Then it becomes the parents fault instead of the adverse effects of vaccines on their demographic. Which in and of itself is a public safety and health issue.

Vaccines and there adverse affects on the “black population” should be a more pressing issue than a religious exemption that has no provable adverse affect on those that have or even haven’t been inoculated.

Protect religious freedom, parental rights and the fundamental right to a free and equal education. Vote No on HB-5044.

Respectfully,

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