

TALKING POINTS on Raised Bill 5044 – Please spell out Religious Exemption. Do not type “RE”

A. There is no public health emergency in CT that warrants a change in the law.

1. Although some have argued that we have vulnerable populations that need protection, there are no numbers available of that population. It is important to know this information when considering removing rights from another group.

2. Ask the legislators if they have completed all recommended adult vaccines. Are they walking the talk? The adult vaccination schedule can be found here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/adult.html#table-age>

3. Ask the legislators if they know what is on the recommended schedules for both adults and children. If they do not know, how can they vote on the bill with so little information?

4. Truly immunocompromised children cannot attend public school or be in the public in general. The adults in these settings are also not fully vaccinated. Those who can be in school are often fully vaccinated.

5. Recently released numbers by the Department of Public Health are inaccurate. This has been confirmed by multiple superintendents. Despite that, religious exemption numbers are very low. Only 10% of districts are reporting slightly higher exemptions. The majority of those schools with higher exemption rates are very small schools such as Waldorf and Montessori schools. This skews the percentages and makes them appear higher.

6. There is no herd immunity because adults are not vaccinated. Nevertheless, there is still no outbreak of anything.

7. The current law is working just fine. Quarantine procedures currently in place are very effective at controlling the spread of infection.

8. Healthy kids don't get others sick. One must have an illness to spread it. Lack of vaccination does not equal infected.

B. Removal of the religious exemption discriminates against those who with deeply held religious beliefs.

1. Removal of the religious exemption is legislative creep to further erode family relationships. It removes the parents' informed choice about their child's medical care but leaves them financially responsible in the event their child has a reaction to vaccines.

2. Forty five states retain religious and/or philosophical exemptions with vaccination rates lower than Connecticut's, yet have not suffered outbreaks.

3. Fear mongering around this manufactured threat will lead to discrimination, segregation and bullying of this small minority group of children.