



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
134 FARMINGTON AVENUE
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105 - 3784

CHRISTOPHER C. HEALY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEACON DAVID W. REYNOLDS
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

ANNE S. LAMONICA
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR EDUCATION

LORI A. STEWART
LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

RE: HB 7005

*AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FORM
TO BE USED BY PARENTS WHO OBJECT
TO IMMUNIZATION ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS
AND NOTIFICATION TO SCHOOL NURSES
CONCERNING DISCRETION IN ACKNOWLEDGING SUCH OBJECTIONS*

May 9, 2019

Dear Legislators,

We write to you regarding HB 7005 and the possible elimination of the religious exemption from mandatory vaccinations. We share your concerns over the protection of pregnant women, the unborn, and the immune-compromised.

The Catholic Conference, a defender of religious liberty, contends, in general, that religious exemptions should be jealously guarded. All of us have a responsibility to inform our conscience properly before accepting or refusing immunization against dangerous contagious diseases. At the same time, the Catholic Church teaches that we live in community with each other and must balance our rights with the legitimate responsibility to promote the common good.

The Catholic Church encourages the use of vaccines, and our Connecticut Catholic Schools comply with the state's mandatory immunization statute. The Church recognizes the conscientious objection to certain vaccines that use human fetal cell lines, but the use of such vaccines is not immoral according to Church guidance. For background on the Church's position, the Pontifical Academy has released guidance to Catholics on the importance of public health, vaccinations, and alternative vaccinations. Our Catholic schools follow mandatory immunization statutes. Please see: [https://www.ncbcenter.org/files/9815/0653/5466/Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived from Aborted Human Fetuses.pdf](https://www.ncbcenter.org/files/9815/0653/5466/Moral%20Reflections%20on%20Vaccines%20Prepared%20from%20Cells%20Derived%20from%20Aborted%20Human%20Fetuses.pdf).

Several residents have contacted us regarding their sincerely held religious objections to vaccines that are produced using human fetal cell lines, human DNA, and DNA from other animal species. We should respect their objections, so long as there is no health risk. The existence of a health risk is a question of fact beyond our expertise.

At the same time, regarding HB 7005, we respect the conscientious objection of school nurses to acknowledge forms for religious exemptions from vaccinations.

If students are denied entry into their school due to their religious objections to vaccines, such students should receive free, alternative educational placement of their choice while their rights are ultimately determined.

Finally, the state should pursue and encourage development of alternative vaccines that address the reasons for religious objections.