



Sept 9th, 2019

Dear Honorable Judge Denise Sher,

I am distraught at the state of affairs in the aftermath of the rushed change of New York State's religious exemption for immunizations that has impacted thousands upon thousands of students across the state this summer. New York has become a place that is hostile to religious individuals and their freedoms. Instead of the land of the free, home of the brave; our State is the land of the oppressed, home of the lobbyists. As the Superintendent of a private school, I have seen the devastating impact of this ill-advised, rushed, and half-baked legislation to our community. By removing the ability for a parent to decide if an injection is best for their child's individual needs and using the basic fundamental right of an education to put pressure on our families, the lobbyists are using manipulative games to push an un-american agenda.

The individual stories of our families whose lives are thrown into disarray are heartbreaking, even though not a single one of them has ever posed a health risk to our school population. The children who have attended our school their entire lives will no longer be able to receive any services from their religious community which they've called home. All over the state, the horrible individual situations are multiplied by the tens of thousands: students on the cusp of finishing their academic career now graduating from nowhere; jobs and income lost as one parent must stay home to educate their children the best they can despite little or no training; and families with young children leaving the state.

The first vote of this bill on June 13th in committee denied access to the floor. Moments later, the vote is changed because the "powers that be" didn't like the outcome? This is truly embarrassing for the State of New York. I hope you can bring reason to a failed roll out of new legislation, and grant a stay to this grossly implemented change.

Also, this is the second time this year an assault has been aimed at religious schools. The first was the planned new roll-out of substantial equivalency which attempted to give local public school boards the authority to close down their private competition. After a great outcry from private and public administrators, the new rules that would handcuff private schools in the state of New York were repealed. This last minute removal of religious exemptions for immunizations is another dirty political trick of the same design, of the same material, and it's wrong.

Please grant a stay for the thousands of kids negatively impacted by this poorly conceived bill. Give parents time to adequately plan for their child's educational and medical needs. Give students time to say goodbye to their supportive communities instead of being ripped away from them in the middle of the night. Please let wisdom prevail, and let America be the land of the free, the home of the brave.

Sincerely,

Rev. Joel Maus
Superintendent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Maus', is written over a light blue circular background.