



St. John Lutheran School

August 29, 2019

To Whom it May Concern:

It is with deep sorrow that I am writing to you regarding the recent decision by New York State to remove the religious exemption for vaccinations. As principal of St. John Lutheran, we are faced with the ramifications of this new law. This bill clearly did not consider the effects students, parents, and educators would feel in this.

I know these families make these decisions based on their deeply held religious beliefs. They were given virtually no time to make other arrangements. The state is forcing them to vaccinate, home educate, or move out of the state. Children are deeply hurting because of the negligence of our leaders. Schools throughout the state are dealing with so many unknowns. There has been virtually no time to prepare. Private schools, like ours, rely very little on state funding. Please consider the financial and ethical ramifications. We rely on tuition for salaries and programs. In losing these families, many schools are facing financial hardship. Our teachers have invested so much time into building relationships with these children and nurturing their development.

It appears as though New York State has become very hostile toward religious families. The plan for substantial equivalency only reinforces what families of faith are already feeling is an attack. What has happened to religious and parental freedom? These children deserve the right to a quality education. It appears as though the pharmaceutical industry has a greater influence in our legislature, than our families of ethical religious beliefs. Were pediatricians consulted with the untimely deadlines of these vaccinations? Some pediatricians in our area are refusing to give this number of vaccines in such a short period of time.

Please, I implore you, grant a stay for these tens of thousands of children and all those affected by this bill. Let New Yorkers, our families continue to have this freedom.

Sincerely,

Katie Gundell
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