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State of Connecticut
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ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
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COMMERCE COMMITTEE
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April 12, 2022

Dr. Manisha Juthani, Commissioner
410 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Commissioner Juthani,

I write to you today to ask that the Department of Public Health review the grandfathering clause in the removal of the religious exemption bill and provide clarification to all CT college and university administrators. I have had several constituents and concerned parents reach out to me over the past few months with concerns over what school administrators have been telling them regarding students who have a religious exemption and are now transitioning from high school to a university or college. From what I've been told, administrators are incorrectly stating that CT students (rising college freshman) who were "grandfathered" by having a religious exemption on file prior to April 28, 2021 (when the bill was signed) will no longer be honored. According to Public Act 21-6 as amended by Amendment "A" and "G", it clearly states that higher education is included in the grandfathering clause. Unfortunately, due to conflicting interpretations these students who have had religious exemptions their entire life are now being told they can no longer attend the school of their choice.

I have attached several relevant documents including copies of the public act, the bill analysis as amended by House "A" and "G" and a link to the Senate floor debate where I explicitly asked the proponent of the bill if these students would be grandfathered under the public act. As you can see from the video at the fifty-minute mark, the proponent told the Senate Chamber that students entering institutions of higher education would indeed be included in the grandfathering clause.

In order to clear things up with all CT college and university administrators, I ask that the DPH release a statement and provide clarification of the department's position on the issue. If the department disagrees that these students are grandfathered under the law, I would like to know where that is stated in our state statutes. These students are healthy young adults simply trying to further their education and we should be fostering their attempts to better their lives and their communities through higher education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Sampson", with a long, sweeping underline.

State Senator Rob Sampson
16th District