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AFT Healthcare 

TESTIMONY OF
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MEMBER, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH QUALITY OF CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Public Health Committee
March 19, 2013

***SB 1128 AN ACT CONCERNING INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATIONS FOR HEALTH CARE
EMPLOYEES***

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. My name is John Brady. I am a Registered Nurse at Backus Hospital in Norwich. I am also President of the Backus Federation of Nurses, a union representing approximately 400 registered nurses at Backus Hospital. I submit this testimony in opposition to SB 1128, An Act Concerning Influenza Vaccinations for Health Care Employees.

I strongly encourage my members to carefully consider receiving the flu vaccine every year. However, I also understand that there may be many reasons why some of my members may chose not to be vaccinated, including religious objections and health concerns. Health concerns range from an adverse reaction to a full allergy.

As an emergency room nurse, I care for many patients who have received the flu vaccine and then tested positive for the flu. The decision of which strains of influenza to vaccinate against is an educated guess. Some years this guess is close and other years it misses badly. The CDC estimates this year's vaccine to be 62% effective. There is a strong argument that wearing a mask provides better protection, for both the health care worker and patients. Failure to comply with this legislation could place health care workers' jobs in jeopardy. The CDC has set a goal of 90% vaccination rate among health care workers, a goal that is achievable with a voluntary labor/management program.

For all of these reasons I stand opposed to mandatory vaccinations of health care workers. Instead, I propose a common sense approach. Health care workers should be given the opportunity to either be vaccinated or wear a mask while at work during the flu season.

I urge a no vote on SB 1128. I am at your service if I can be of help.

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