

**MAINE
PRINCIPALS'
ASSOCIATION**



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*MPA is an Equal
Opportunity Organization*

TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
**RE: In Opposition of LD 51: An Act to Restore Religious and
Philosophical Exemptions to Immunization
Requirements**
DATE: April 3, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dr. Holly Blair, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association – Professional Division. The MPA represents more than 700 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals, CTE directors and assistant directors of public and private schools in Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee opposes LD 51. Students have the right to attend school without the fear of being exposed to life-threatening diseases of which they have no control. If a student who can be vaccinated but is not, puts those who physically cannot be vaccinated at risk. When Public Law 2019, chapter 154 removed the exemption from immunization requirements based on religious or philosophical beliefs, these medically fragile students were able to attend school without fear.

As a result of this law, public schools saw a decrease in enrolled students because parents chose to remove their students from public schools and homeschool rather than immunize based on religious and philosophical reasons. Due to this, public schools cannot meet the educational needs of these students.

While we are not medical professionals, we are education professionals and it is our job to provide educational services to all students in a safe environment. Because of this, the MPA urges the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 51.