

Sarah Bohan  
Kennebunk  
LD 51

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Education & Cultural Affairs Committee, I am testifying in support of LD 51.

The passage of LD 798 in 2019 signified an end of opportunity for my family. My eight-year-old son is autistic. He currently attends public school, which has helped his developmental progress tremendously. He is only able to be present at school because of the IEP exemption that was included in LD 798. After seeing how much school has helped his treatment, I cannot help but worry about children with new IEP's who are excluded from the current special education exemption. It strikes me as being legally inconsistent from a disability-rights perspective to only allow exemptions for children who had existing individual education plans and exemptions on file prior to 2021. All special-needs children deserve access to education.

My daughter was born in 2020. Having a sibling with autism, I would prefer her to have an individualized vaccine schedule based on a fully informed genetic profile. Because of this, my daughter will not be allowed to receive any institutional education in the state of Maine for the entirety of her life. This also means that my work choices are severely restricted. My family would deeply benefit from having two full-time working adults. With an intense need for employees across multiple industries state-wide, the LD 798 mandate continues to keep people like me out of the workforce.

LD 51 would help bolster the Maine workforce. It would also provide a path to a better future for families like mine.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sarah Bohan, LMT