

Anne Sarbanis
Phippsburg
LD 51

My name is Annie Sarbanis and I am testifying in support of LD 51.

I am a mother with the lived experience of a child with a lifelong vaccine injury. Because of this injury, my child is medically exempt under the Maine Vaccine Exemption Law, LD 798, however, in September 2022, on this child's 9th birthday, I received a letter from my school district that the medical exemption that we had on file for my child, written in March of 2021 was not going to be accepted. We had two weeks to get our child caught up on their vaccines or they would be excluded from school until they were. I will repeat, our legally obtained medical exemption that was written by a licensed, practicing medical provider that was licensed to practice in the State of Maine at the time that the exemption was written and met the licensing requirements under the law, was being arbitrarily rejected due to a recent "rule change" that put my child's medical exemption into the gray area. Technically legal but without the funds or resources to arbitrate with our school district, we were forced to seek another medical exemption or have our child and his 4 siblings who are also medically exempt due to our family's medical history removed from school.

My children are the children that LD798 was supposed to protect, medically compromised children who can not receive vaccines safely and who are otherwise medically exempt. However, instead, like many of us warned you, this terrible law and subsequent rule changes have harmed my children. During the legislative session in 2019 for LD 798, we were promised that medical exemptions would become more accessible, that no rule pertaining to the law would create any barriers to families and children in need of obtaining a medical exemption. Lies. We were told that medical exemptions would be readily accepted to allow children who are medically exempt to continue to attend school without interruptions. More Lies. We warned you that children like mine would be harmed by the removal of the philosophical and religious exemptions, exemptions that families like mine had relied on to protect our children from further harm and lifelong vaccine injuries for years due to the changing medical climate of our state.

However, children were not the only one's harmed by this law:

Inlaw- fired for declining for the Covid-19 vaccine after 42 years as a practicing cardio pulmonary bedside nurse

Inlaw- fired after 16 years as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker while pregnant for declining the covid vaccine due to lack of adequate data to support the safety

Friend- diagnosed with guillain-barre syndrome after receiving the flu vaccine in 2016, fired after 15 years as an ER nurse in Sept of 2021 for refusing the flu vaccine

But being fired is not the worst that has happened:

Family member-diagnosed with Myocarditis after their first dose of pfizer's covid 19 vaccine, threatened to lose their job if they did not receive their second dose, died of a massive heart attack 3 weeks after their second dose.

Please vote to right this wrong, restore religious and philosophical exemptions for vaccinations in the State of Maine.