

Good Morning Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and esteemed committee members, I am asking you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 51. My name is Makayla Robinson. I have been a lifelong resident of Maine. I grew up in a Christian home, which attended church almost every Sunday. I am proud to say that I still hold the same strong religious beliefs.

I am also a registered nurse and have worked in healthcare since I was 16 years old. When LD 798 went into effect and removed religious exemptions, it greatly impacted my family and I. Being denied a religious exemption for certain required vaccines resulted in being terminated from my job. I am still unable to find a job that grants religious exemptions in my career field in Maine. Meanwhile, my industry in Maine also continues to struggle under dangerous staffing shortages, while qualified and experienced Nurses like myself are unable to work.

Not being able to practice as a nurse has had a significant impact on my mental health. I have no income, I am no longer able to do the work I love doing and feel as though I am being punished for having a personal religious belief. I am tempted to move to another state where religious exemptions are allowed so I can work and provide for myself and my family, like many of my colleagues were also terminated due to these requirements.

I have worked incredibly hard to be the nurse I am today. I want to work. I want to care for the people of Maine and I want to be treated equally, no matter what religious belief I might have. The passing of LD 798 resulted in many inequalities. LD 798 does not allow acceptance of positive titers, nearly all medical exemptions were denied, and several protocols and policies regarding accommodations for unvaccinated people that were valid hours before the enforcement is now not acceptable.

By voting "ought to pass" for LD 51, it would allow several healthcare workers like myself to return to work and reduce the workload and stress on the already fragile healthcare community. It would also allow for several of Maine's children to return to school, and many families affected by LD 798 would be more likely to stay in Maine. Please pass this bill and allow myself and others like me return to work and school.

Thank you for your time, Makayla, RN BSN