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## Christian Civic League of Maine

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Maine Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Mike McClellan, Policy Director for the Christian Civic League of Maine. The Christian Civic League of Maine envisions a state and nation where God is honored, religious freedom flourishes, families thrive, and life is cherished. We believe a Biblical approach works in life and including in governance.

I am here to testify in favor of LD 51 *An Act to Restore Religious and Philosophical Exemptions to Immunization Requirements - Rep. Gary Drinkwater of Milford.* Public Law 2019, chapter 154 removed the exemption from immunization requirements based on religious or philosophical beliefs for students in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools, and employees of nursery schools and certain healthcare facilities. This bill reinstates religious and philosophical exemptions.

The Christian Civic League of Maine believes that if a person has a religious or philosophical conviction regarding the use of a certain vaccine, or all vaccines, they should have the right to exercise that conviction and refuse a vaccine without being deprived of other rights and liberties enjoyed by Mainers.

The Christian Civic league of Maine is not against vaccinations and I personally am not against vaccinations. It is easy to document that they have helped humanity. We are for this legislation in part because it clearly seeks to return religious rights and sincerely held philosophical rights of the people of Maine. These are rights that did not come from the State of Maine and the State of Maine had no right to take them away. To lose one of these rights was an overreach by the state but to take both in one bill was incredible. I have heard the argument that it has been said that no Church doctrine speaks to vaccinations. I would point out that many churches in Maine are non-denominational and many of us know that from the beginning of the Church, it was not the building or a place that was viewed as the Church, but each individual believer/person was truly the Church. Another gift to us from God. We each then, coming together, hold some things to be sacred truth, others debatable. I see the parental decision concerning the use of vaccinations on our children as a religious belief that not all hold... but important because some do.

Listing to a history pod cast last week. I heard the story and events of the internment of Japanese American citizens during WW II. The story traced a government where certain members decided to remove rights from citizens because of political agendas. The story, I am guessing, is not told in schools today but is a dark and informative lesson in both how great our Constitutional Republic was set up to be and what happens when government decides to veer off in another direction.

In closing, there are so many quotes concerning religious freedom from our founders, here are two: Founding Father James Madison, said "No power over freedom of religion (is) delegated to the United States by the Constitution." Thomas Jefferson said "Rightful liberty is unobstructed action according to our will within limits drawn around us by equal rights of others. I do not add within the limits of the law because law is often but the tyrant's will, and always so when it violates the rights of the individual." It is clear that the founding fathers viewed the rights of each individual to be sacred.

Please join me and vote Ought To Pass on LD 51. Thank you for your time and consideration today. Know that many are hopeful of your actions and are praying for each of you and your families. God bless,

Mike

Mike McClellan

Policy Director

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