



**Testimony of Allen Sarvinas  
Parents' Rights in Education Maine  
Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
Testimony in Support of LD 51:  
Restore Parents' Rights in Education  
April 3, 2023**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and the distinguished members on the Committee of Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Allen Sarvinas and I serve as director of Parents' Rights in Education Maine. We are a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for parents' rights in education through the lenses of individual educational freedom. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 51.

The Supreme Court of the United States in the 1979 *Parham v. J.R.* proclaimed, "Simply because the decision of a parent...involves risks does not automatically transfer the power to make that decision from the parents to some agency or officer of the state." The liberty of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children is a fundamental inherent right. Removing religious and philosophical exemptions attacked thousands of parents' sincerely held core beliefs, violating their right to direct their child's education through our public, private, and online schools. The government's case was supplemented by a trending excuse leading up to the removal of these exemptions which is the fallacy that parents are lying about their religious exemptions due to not being able to use personal exemptions. If this were true, then the sustained [loss of students for the public educational system](#) would not be so extensive. Our belief then, and now, continues to be that these exceptional parents are also of the kind that protect their privacy, so using personal exemptions shields them from having to divulge their sincerely held core beliefs to perceived strangers and a state bureaucracy which continues to build upon its [anti-religious record](#).

It is in the government's best interest to incentivize parents to redirect their child's education back to the incredibly resourceful Maine public school system. This invaluable interest overwhelms any compelling interest to oppose exemptions. We urgently request the Committee of Education and Cultural Affairs, deem LD 51 "Ought To Pass", which will restore trust and the inherent rights of Maine parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children.