

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the committee

I am asking you to vote ought to pass on LD 51. I am a Registered Nurse of 11 years receiving my Bachelor's degree from a Maine University. I was born and raised in Central Maine, where generations before me were also born and raised. I was fortunate to travel for a few years out of college with my degree and greater my expertise. My husband and I decided to return to Maine after traveling to work and raise our family, since we both admired this state and cherished our childhood here.

I always felt a sense of freedom living in Maine. There were opportunities for housing, my husband to start a business, and within the nursing field. I continued to work at Maine Medical Center for 10 years giving the highest level of care to my patients; emotionally and physically. I climbed the clinical ladder over my 10 years pursuing my level III RN with helping to improve our care, education, research, etc. I was a preceptor, mentor, and a resource nurse invested in our unit. I felt that I could continue on this journey and continue my passion for bedside nursing with my patients as they brought their babies into the world while continuing to climb the clinical ladder for my foreseeable future.

It wasn't until November 2021 that this passion was striped and my dream job had to come to an end. I was forced out of my job because I declined to accept the Covid-19 vaccination. Now at the time, I was 6 months pregnant with my second child after experiencing a loss. Being a healthcare professional, I read multiple articles regarding the vaccine from multiple countries with no definitive research or knowledge as to how this vaccine could affect an individual that was pregnant, their unborn child, or their child later in life. Due to the lack of information, I declined as it was not worth the risk to me. I wrote a exemption in hopes for the facility to understand, it was denied. I attempted to get a medical exemption from multiple providers and was denied. I was forced out of my profession at 6 months pregnant, being the member of my household that also carried all our benefits.

I am one of the fortunate professionals that was able to acquire full-time remote employment, who still to this day have never inquired about my vaccination status. I prided the state of Maine and wanted to continue to serve it, however I am now working for a company out of the state for the benefit of my family and my professional reputation so that I am represented for my skills, passion, professionalism, experience and not my vaccine status.

Personal autonomy and the right to make our own medical decisions is something that should be respected. I am not against vaccination and I am not for vaccination. I am for choice. We do not know each person's struggles or their beliefs. Just as patients the information that is available should be presented to an individual and then they should be able to make their own choice on what is best for them and their situation. Medical procedures, care, and exams cannot be performed without informed consent and patients cannot be discriminated against for those decisions. This respect should be the same for every individual no matter age, race, profession, gender, etc.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and please vote ought to pass on LD 51.

Thank you,
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